CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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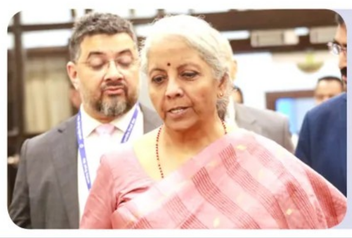
Israel strikes fuel depots near Tehran as conflict enter Day 9 P9



Women's financial access driving economic transformation: FM P11

P12 Tajinderpal Singh Toor Wins Shot Put Gold at Indian Open Throws

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Massive flames roar above Iran after IDF bombards oil depots

'River of fire' flows through Tehran skyline after Israel warplanes hit 5 oil sites in and around Tehran and Alborz, killing four and causing toxic rain

TEHRAN

Massive blasts and towering plumes of smoke lit up Iranian capital Tehran early Sunday after US-Israeli forces expanded their bombardment of the country, targeting five key fuel depots in the Iranian capital. Meanwhile, Iran's de facto leader vowed to make its adversaries "pay the price."

Four people, including two tanker drivers, were killed in the attack, said the CEO of National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company.

The attacks appeared to be the first targeting energy infrastructure since the joint US-Israeli air war on Iran began last weekend. Enormous fires turned the Tehran skyline orange overnight, before filling the sky with black, dense, oily smoke.

Warplanes hit multiple oil depots in and around Tehran, igniting huge fires and sending thick black smoke across the skyline, visible even in neighbouring areas such as Karaj. Footage showed fireballs, long columns of smoke, and flames lighting up the night sky, while explosions shook parts of the city.

The strikes hit at least five oil facilities in and near Tehran, including four storage depots and a petroleum products transport centre, Iranian officials said.

The fires were later brought under control, though fuel distribution was "temporarily interrupted" as damage was assessed. Smoke from the fires left a dark haze over the capital into Sunday morning, and residents reported the smell of burning fuel lingering in the air.

Iran's authorities acknowledged the explosions and fires but said its fuel reserves remained secure.

The attacks on fuel depots, which appeared to be the first on Iran's energy infrastructure since the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran last weekend, were part of Israel's attempts to reach "many more targets" in order to destabilize Iran's government and "allow for change."

—Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel PM

Strike part of efforts to deepen damage to Iran's military infra: IDF

.The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) confirmed its air force struck "fuel storage facilities in Tehran" to prevent their use by Iran's military.

"We targeted several fuel storage sites used by the Iranian military, calling the strikes part of efforts to deepen damage to the regime's military infrastructure," it stated.

US getting rid of a major 'cancer': Trump

WASHINGTON

Comparing the Iranian regime to 'cancer', the United States President Donald Trump told reporters on Saturday that they have eliminated the entire leadership in Iran, describing it as akin to getting rid of a major 'cancer' from the face of the earth.

The US President was aboard the Air Force one and enroute to Miami when he addressed the press regarding the ongoing operation in the West Asian country. Donald Trump also addressed reports that were circulating over US bombing an elementary girls' school in Iran. He vehemently denied it and claimed that Iran must have carried out the act themselves, blaming inaccuracy of Iranian weapons as a reason. "No, I don't believe so. Based on what I've seen that was done by Iran. They have no accuracy whatsoever. It was done by Iran," Trump said.

Team India sealed a historic third title in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup by defeating New Zealand by 96 runs at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday. India's power-packed batting line-up, which was in top form, plundered 255-5 from 20 overs against NZ's 159. An explosive start from Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan powered India to 255, the highest total ever in a T20 World Cup final, setting a daunting 256-run target for New Zealand and sealing an ultra-dominant victory.

Israel-US war on Iran: **Day 9**

Started: **February 28**

Israel air strikes on Iran: **Over 3,400**

Civilian casualities: **1,200**

Civilian injuries: **Over 10,000**

Conflict escalates across Gulf

DUBAI

The war in West Asia has entered ninth day and situation is far from getting normal.

The regional conflict has escalated across the Gulf. In Lebanon, Israeli strikes targeted Hezbollah positions and central Beirut, killing at least four in a hotel and 294 over the past week. Saudi authorities intercepted drones aimed at Riyadh's diplomatic quarter, while Kuwait and Bahrain reported Iranian drone strikes on fuel tanks and a desalination plant, respectively.

Israel carried out around 3,400 strikes on Iran since February 28. Overnight attacks hit 16 military aircraft at Mehrabad Airport and multiple oil depots, temporarily interrupting fuel distribution in Tehran.

Since February 28, Israel has carried out approximately 3,400 strikes on Iran, including overnight attacks that damaged 16 military aircraft at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport. Kuwait has announced precautionary cuts in crude oil production due to threats in the Strait of Hormuz.

At least 1,200 civilians have been killed and around 10,000 wounded, as per Iran's health ministry.

IN SHORT

- Iran drone attack damaged water desalination plant: Bahrain
- About 200 members of Hezbollah, other terror groups killed in strikes on Lebanon: IDF
- Two soldiers killed in southern Lebanon: IDF
- Oman warns Mideast at 'dangerous turning point'
- Iran can seek damages from countries hosting US bases, says hardliner.
- Qatar Airways resumes limited flight schedule as travel chaos persists.

Iran pound UAE with missiles, drones

The United Arab Emirates was targeted by 17 Iranian ballistic missiles and 117 drone attacks on Sunday, the Emirati defense ministry said in a statement. Most of the attacks were intercepted but one ballistic missile fell into the sea and four drones fell in Emirati territory, it added. The rate of Iranian ballistic missile attacks on the Emirates has declined significantly, but the defense ministry has reported more than 100 drone attacks per day.

Iran won't surrender: Iran President

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian reiterated that his country would not surrender and would "not allow even one inch of the country's territory to be taken," according to IRIB, Iran's state broadcaster. "Iran and our nation have not bowed—and will not bow easily—before bullying, oppression, or aggression," he said. Pezeshkian's comments follow his apology on Saturday to Persian Gulf states that had been hit by Iranian missiles last week.

Saudi Arabia warns Iran of retaliation

Saudi officials delivered a clear message to Tehran that while the kingdom prefers a diplomatic settlement, persistent attacks on Saudi territory or its energy sector could trigger a direct response. The warning highlights Riyadh's growing concern over the regional fallout from the intensifying confrontation involving Iran, the United States, and Israel. The message was reportedly conveyed before Iranian President delivered a speech.

Many obstacles still remain in women's development: Prez

NEW DELHI

Despite numerous efforts toward women's empowerment, many obstacles still remain in women's journey of development, said President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday.

Addressing an event organised by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to mark the International Women's Day, the President said even today, many women face problems such as discrimination, unequal pay for equal work and domestic violence. "These cannot be addressed solely through legislation. A shift in societal mindset is essential. Only when we move beyond the mindset of gender-based discrimination can we truly establish equality in society. To achieve development in the true sense, we must ensure equal participation of women, who constitute nearly half of the country's population," she said.

"We have set the goal of making India a developed nation by 2047. For our country to progress rapidly and for realising the full potential of citizens for the national benefit, it is essential that we not only inspire women to dream big but also support them at every step in achieving those dreams. In an environment free from fear and discrimination, women can contribute their best towards nation-building," she added.

She further said that, on International Women's Day, all citizens should pledge to provide education and equal opportunities to every girl, to prioritise the respect and safety of women, and to strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination prevalent in society. "By doing so, we can present the ideal of women's empowerment to the world," she said.

The president said that India is rapidly moving towards women-led development. "Over the past decade, a strong foundation has been laid for removing barriers in the path of women. India has achieved gender parity in school education. Even in higher education, the number of female students is higher in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio."

Trump is 'dictator', Modi his 'slave': Kharge

KALABURAGI

AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday said US President Donald Trump is a "dictator" and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is his "gulam" (slave), as he targeted the BJP-led government at the Centre over its stand on the ongoing Middle Eastern crisis, trade deal with the USA, and tariff issue.

Addressing a gathering in Chittapur here, he claimed that Modi is "controlled" by Trump using the Jeffrey Epstein files. "It (Iran) is also a country, its supreme leader was murdered...if the leader of a country is killed will that country and the world be safe? Think about it. Whether it is Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei or Venezuela's leader (Nicolas Maduro Moros). If leaders of countries are threatened like this, there will be no peace in the world," Kharge said, as he accused the US for its "arrogance" and violating international laws. Also, targeting India's trade deal with the USA, he claimed that India was forced to accept it, where it cannot impose tariffs on the import of several agricultural products, while the Americans impose tariffs on what India exports to them.

QUICK READ

'Do not take photo, record videos'

DUBAI: Amid Iran war, the Indian Embassy in UAE has issued advisory for Indian nationals. According to the advisory, filming of incident sites or prohibited areas and sharing them on social media platforms. "UAE authorities have warned that strict action would be taken against any individual for the unauthorized filming of incident sites or prohibited areas or inside the airport(s)," read the advisory of the Indian Embassy in UAE. Flight operations to and from Dubai airport, world's busiest international aviation centre had been suspended as a precautionary measure.

'Over 52,000 Indians brought home from Gulf'

NEW DELHI: Over 52,000 Indians were safely brought back from the Gulf region to India between March 1 and 7, according to the Ministry of External Affairs. MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X on Saturday that out of these, 32,107 passengers travelled on Indian carriers. He stated that the Indian government is closely monitoring the situation in West Asia and the Gulf region, with particular attention to the safety and welfare of Indian nationals who are stranded there in transit or on short-term visits.

STORMY SESSION AHEAD

Centre may allot 3-hr discussion on no-confidence motion against LS Speaker

NEW DELHI

The stage is set for stormy proceedings as the Lok Sabha prepares to take up a a motion moved by the Opposition seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla, with the second leg of the Budget Session resuming on Monday.

The rare move, the first in nearly four decades, marks the deepening rift between the Opposition and the ruling side.

According to Monday's agenda, the resolution against the Speaker is the sole item listed in the Lok Sabha's business for the day.

"The government is likely to allocate around three hours to the discussion on the motion, with three members from the Treasury and Opposition Benches expected to participate," sources said.

According to sources, "From Congress, either Lok Sabha deputy leader Gaurav Gogoi or KC Venugopal is likely to take part in the debate." Other opposition parties are also expected to raise concerns over the functioning of the Chair and broader issues relating to parliamentary procedures.

While both the Congress and the BJP have issued whips directing their members to be present in the House, the BJP-led NDA holds a clear numerical advantage to defeat the resolution in the 543-member Lok Sabha.

However, the Opposition received a boost after the TMC annouced its support to the motion, despite not having signed it earlier.

As many as 118 Opposition members had submitted the notice to move a resolution to remove Birla from office for not allowing Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders to speak in the House on the motion of thanks to the president's address, as well as for suspending eight opposition MPs.

It will be a rare moment when Birla does not chair the proceedings and instead sit among the members as the House takes up the notice seeking his removal.

Don't want third RS term: Digvijaya

BHOPAL

Veteran Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Sunday rejected retirement plan rumours, saying he has only requested the party not to consider him for a third term in Rajya Sabha after his stint as a sitting MP expires.He will continue to serve the party till his last breath, Singh added. The speculation about Singh's future plans surfaced after he posted a video of a couple enjoying their retirement by visiting various places in the country on March 5. "My Retirement Plans? Maybe. Why not? Jai Siya Ram," he had written on X.

GBA polls: Women miss 50% reservation mark

The state govt has released the reservation list for 369 wards under the Greater Bengaluru Authority elections; with 176 wards reserved for women across 5 city corporations, political activity has intensified as aspirants gear up for the polls

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

While the announcement has set the stage for the upcoming civic elections, the allocation of seats for women has sparked discussion as it falls short of the expected 50 percent reservation.

According to the final list, 369 wards have been reserved across the five city corporations. Out of these, 176 wards have been reserved for women candidates. However, this number does not reach the 50 percent reservation mark, which many had demanded during the consultation stage.

If the 50 percent quota had been implemented, at least 185 wards should have been reserved for women out of the total 369 wards. This means nine additional wards would have needed to be allocated to women for the reservation to reach the 50 percent mark.

The issue had already attracted attention earlier when the draft reservation list was released. At that time, several stakeholders had submitted objections and suggestions, specifically demanding that women be given 50 percent

reservation in the civic body. Despite those demands, the final reservation list continues to allocate only 176 wards to women, leaving the demand partially unmet.

The reservation distribution has been announced for each of the five municipal corporations under the GBA structure.

In the Bengaluru South City Corporation, which has 72 wards in total, the reservation distribution includes 7 wards for Scheduled Castes (SC), 1 ward for Scheduled Tribes (ST), 19 wards for Backward Class A (BCA) and 5 wards for Backward Class B (BCB). The General category accounts for 40 wards, while 34 wards are reserved for women.

The Bengaluru North City Corporation also consists of 72 wards. Among them, 9 wards are reserved for SC, 2 for ST, 19 for BCA, and 5 for BCB. In addition, 37 wards fall under the General category, and 34 wards are reserved for women. Meanwhile, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation has 63 wards.

Of these, 11 wards are reserved for SC, 1 for ST, 15 for BCA, and 4 for BCB. The General category includes 32 wards, and 30 wards have been reserved for women.

Although the final reservation list has now been published, the debate around women's representation continues, as the total number of wards reserved for women remains below the 50 percent benchmark suggested during the draft stage.

QUICK READ

PG Medical, 4th round seat allocation results announced, KEA

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka Examinations Authority announced the final results of the 4th round (stray vacancy) seat allocation for postgraduate medical course admissions on Saturday, marking the end of the counselling process for the year 2025. Out of the total 898 clinical seats available for this round, 115 seats have been allotted. Another 783 seats remain unallocated, said Islavuddin Gadyal, the authority's administrative officer. Those who have been allotted seats should pay the fee and download the admit card between March 9 and 11. They should report to the colleges by March 12, he explained.

Forest officer raided over excessive assets

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Lokayukta sleuths conducted a raid on range forest officer Dalesh AL, attached to the Bangalore Development Authority, in connection with a Disproportionate Assets case. The searches were carried out at his residence in Annapoorneshwarinagar, his office, and the houses of his relatives across more than four locations. During the raid, authorities reportedly uncovered immovable assets, including three plots, two houses, a commercial building, and 17 acres 20 guntas of agricultural land, valued at approximately Rs 2.7 crore. Movable assets seized included Rs 1.3 lakh in cash, gold ornaments worth Rs 13 lakh, and silver ornaments valued at around Rs 34.5 lakh, bringing the total estimated disproportionate assets to roughly Rs 3.1 crore.

BBMP takes over CA land worth ₹10 cr, justice for community

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has conducted a major drive in Shantiniketan Layout in South Bengaluru. On the orders of the High Court, the encroachment building was vacated and a 20,000 sq ft CA building worth Rs 10 crore was demolished. The corporation has taken possession of the land for community facility. The operation was carried out by South Zone Corporation Commissioner KN Ramesh. It was conducted under tight police security under the leadership of Ramesh. A nameplate has also been installed at the site to prevent misuse of the space in future.

'Steep power tariff hike untimely burden on consumers'

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

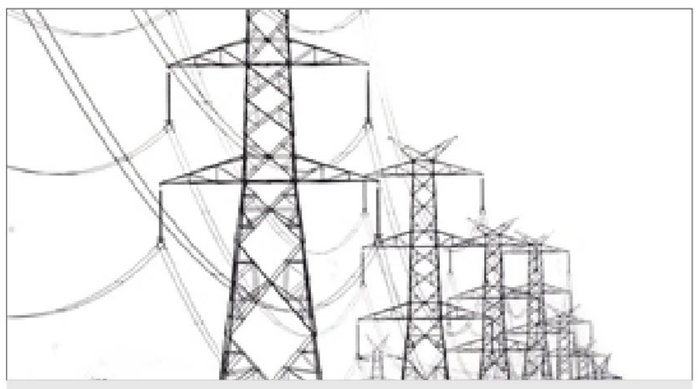
The Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) had recently paved way for hiking power tariff ranging from a minimum of 10 paise to a maximum of 95 paise per unit for industrial and commercial consumers.

To compensate for the revenue gap, KERC approved upward revisions in energy and demand charges for certain user categories, covering shops and establishments, manufacturing units, MSMEs and IT tech parks.

RWAs also said higher tariffs will ultimately burden households through rising living and maintenance costs.

Prabhu Patil, President of Rohan Vasantha Apartments in Marathahalli, said, the hike is not as small as one might think, and the timing is bad, coming in summer. Usually, our bill is around Rs 3.3 to Rs 3.7 lakh for 13 meters across nine blocks with 579 flats, and it goes up even more in summer due to AC usage, easily touching over Rs 4 lakh.

We started exploring solar options in the last few months. Satish Mallya, President, Bangalore Apartments Federation and a member of KERC, said, Increasing tariffs now cannot be the only solution. If power charges go up, apartment maintenance costs will also rise, and residents will ultimately bear the burden. Instead of repeatedly increasing tariffs due to inefficiencies, authorities should focus on improving the system and promoting rooftop solar power in Bengaluru, which can reduce the cost of power purchase in the long run.



'Industries already under pressure from rising freight, raw material costs'

Uma Reddy, President, FKCCI, said, Industries are already under pressure from rising freight and raw material costs, and any increase in power tariffs at this time will be a major blow, especially for MSMEs. Power is essential for manufacturing, and higher tariffs will push up product prices, reducing global competitiveness. Small and micro enterprises often work on fixed annual contracts, so they cannot pass on these costs, putting their survival and the jobs they provide at risk.

Representing over 7,000 units, the Peenya Industries Association said energy charges for industrial consumers jumped from around Rs 4.5 to as high as Rs 7.79 per unit, while fixed charges also rose. The association said it is highly disappointing and untimely. It urged the govt to either roll back or provide relief measures for small industries.

78-yr-old man lured into video call, falls prey to sextortion racket

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

What began as a casual online interaction on Facebook turned into a nightmare for a 78-year-old man after fraudsters allegedly trapped him in a sextortion racket and began blackmailing him with intimate videos.

The victim, a retired resident of HAL Old Airport Road, responded to a message from a Facebook profile named Radhika Aggarwal in February. The woman introduced herself as an Indian living in the United Kingdom and continued the conversation over calls and messages.

According to a complaint filed by the victim's daughter-in-law, the woman initially contacted him through a UK-based number before asking him to continue the conversation on WhatsApp using an Indian mobile number.

The friendly chats soon turned personal and intimate. During one of the video calls, the fraudster allegedly persuaded the elderly man to engage in explicit acts while she secretly recorded the interaction. Soon after, the tone of the conversation changed. The accused began sending the victim screenshots and clips from the video call and demanded Rs 2 lakh to prevent the footage from being circulated and shared with his family and friends.

To intensify the pressure, the accused created a fake Instagram account in the victim's name and added several of his relatives. Through the account, she began posting and threatening to circulate the intimate photos and videos, making it appear as if the victim himself had uploaded them. Embarrassed and distressed by the situation, the elderly man confided in his family.

As he was unable to personally visit the police station due to his age, his daughter-in-law lodged a complaint. Cybercrime experts warn such cases are becoming increasingly common. Fraudsters typically befriend victims online, lure them into private video calls and record compromising visuals, which are later used to extort money by threatening to leak the content publicly or share it with family.

Prankster apologises for toy gun stunt in Namma Metro

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Drawing the line on internet pranks, Bengaluru police Saturday apprehended an online prankster who shot a video in 'Namma Metro' using a toy gun.

Arjun, a native of Puducherry, reportedly pranked commuters in a video that went viral on his Instagram account. The incident occurred on February 6, when he boarded a train from Dipanjali Nagar station.

I was carrying a toy gun in my pocket, and the public got angry with me, Arjun said in a video apology posted by Bengaluru city police. He also apologised to the commuters, assuring that he would not repeat such actions.This was not his first public prank in the city.

Arjun's Instagram handle, the_villian_arc, features several stunts shot in crowded places like shops and autorickshaws, where he was seen provoking strangers. The youngster has been living in Bengaluru for the past two years. A prank with a toy gun is not a joke. It can create panic and threaten public safety. Public places are not for risky content. Think before you act, police said.

HC grants bail to Adikesavalu's son Srinivas

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The High Court has granted conditional bail to DA Srinivas, son of DK Adikeshavulu Naidu, who is accused of forging the signature and grabbing the property of businessman K Raghunath, who is said to have committed suicide.

The order was issued by a single-judge bench of Justice Shivashankar Amarannavar, who was hearing a petition filed by Srinivas, the ninth accused in the case being investigated by the CBI.

The petitioner was remanded in police custody for seven days and has been in judicial custody for the last two months. The bench said that bail is being granted considering the fact that the major part of the investigation is now over. Also, a personal bond of Rs 5 lakh and two sureties should be provided.

He should cooperate in further investigation. He should appear before the investigating agency when directed. He should not directly or indirectly try to tamper with evidence. He should surrender his passport to the court within a week of his release from jail.

He should not enter Karnataka until the final report in the case is submitted, except to participate in the hearing. The High Court has granted bail on the condition that he should appear before the trial court without fail and should not be involved in any criminal activities.

Srinivas had forged several documents and receipts belonging to Raghunath and signed them himself, making him the beneficiary. The CBI had alleged that Srinivas had played a key role in the conspiracy with other accused.

Srinivas used fake government stamps in those documents. He created those government stamps himself. In total, he created 60 documents, and it is said that during the CBI investigation, it was found that 46 of them had his signature. In this context, the CBI registered a case and arrested him. Now, he has been granted bail.

Co-op society model not fit for managing apartments, common areas: High Court

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A cooperative society is not an appropriate mechanism for managing residential apartments and their common areas on behalf of owners, the high court has ruled while cancelling the registration of the Sobha HRC Pristine Apartment Owners Co-operative Society in Jakkur.

Justice MG Uma passed the order while allowing a petition filed by Sobha Limited, and cancelled the registration granted by the Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Bengaluru Urban district, to the association, dated September 6, 2023. The court also quashed the order dated February 7, 2024, passed by the Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies in appellate proceedings.

According to Sobha Limited, the petitioner-builder, the local law applicable to the project was the Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act (KAOA) 1972 and the Karnataka Apartment Ownership Rules, 1974.

The company said the deed of declaration, along with the bye-laws, was filed with the deputy registrar of cooperative societies via letter dated June 21, 2023, as required under section 13 of KAOA, and was acknowledged. It argued that maintenance, administration and management of common areas, amenities, equipment and facilities in the project was undertaken by forming an association of owners by executing and registering the deed of declaration under the name of the association and executing Form-B as provided in KAOA, submitting their unit to the provisions of the Act, including a few members of respondent No 3 society. Sobha Limited alleged that 1 TK Parasuraman, claiming to be the chief promoter, approached the assistant registrar of cooperative societies with misleading facts, suppressed material facts, did not adhere to KAOA provisions, and obtained the certificate of registration of respondent No 3 as Sobha HRC Pristine Apartment Owners Co-operative Society Limited under the KCSA, 1959.

DRDO gets notice for canine removal

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A controversy has erupted after animal welfare volunteers alleged that 22 community dogs were illegally captured and removed from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Phase II Township campus at CV Raman Nagar.

Bengaluru Central City Corporation has issued a notice to the DRDO Estate Manager, seeking an explanation over the incident. As per the volunteers, the dogs, many of them sterilised, were captured in a cruel manner, with their mouths and legs tied, before they were sealed inside plastic bags and transported out of the campus.

A video clip of the purported incident was widely shared on social media, raising concerns over who can capture stray dogs and how they can be handled. Activists claimed that the animals were taken away last week and that their current whereabouts remained unknown.

The assistant director of animal husbandry issued an official notice on March 6 to the DRDO Estate Manager. It stated that if the allegations were found to be true, such actions amounted to violations of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023.

TEACHER HIRING

State tweaks rules, gives 90% weightage to exam scores

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The state government has revised the rules for recruitment of primary school teachers, sharply increasing the weightage on the written selection exam while drastically reducing the weightage on academic performance.

The move, claimed education department officials, will help bring better teachers into classrooms. Earlier, marks obtained in academic exams carried a much greater weightage in teacher recruitment.

Under the revised rules, however, 90% weightage has been accorded to the combined scores in teacher recruitment exam and Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET), while the weightage on academic performance has been reduced to just 10 percent, to make teacher recruitment more merit-based.

A notification to this effect was issued after the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced the government will recruit 15,000 school teachers. For Graduate Primary Teachers (GPT), the recruitment examination weightage has been raised to 70 percent from 50 percent, while TET will continue to carry 20% weightage. Additionally, marks obtained in degree exams will now have 8% weightage, while BEd marks will account for 2 percent of the proportion.

In case of candidates with a four-year integrated teacher education degree, weightage for academic performance will be 10%, what earlier used to be 30%. For primary teachers, the recruitment exam weightage has been increased to 70 percent from 35%, while TET weightage has gone up to 20% from 15%. PUC or class 12 marks will carry 8 percent weightage and marks for diploma in elementary education or special education will bear 2% weightage.

Commissioner for School Education Vikas Kishor Suralkar said, the revised system focuses on genuine merit and will help select the best teachers.

QUICK READ

Yellapur celebrates Women's Day with community program

Karwar

A World Women's Day celebration was organized at Kalamma Nagar under the Yellapur Town Panchayat on Sunday. The event was conducted by the Taluk Guarantee Scheme Implementation Committee, Yellapur. Former MLA V. S. Patil inaugurated the program, while committee president Devidas (Ullasa) Nagesh Shanbhag presided over the function. Several dignitaries attended the event, including former Town Panchayat president Narmada Nayak, Yellapur Women's President Pooja Netrekar, and committee member Anil Marathe. Senior police officers and many women from the locality also participated. The program highlighted the importance of women's empowerment and community participation.

Debt burden drives farmer to suicide

Koppal

A 54-year-old farmer allegedly died by suicide after struggling with heavy debt in Ramadurga village of Kanakagiri taluk. The deceased, identified as Nagappa Talawara, had reportedly taken loans from banks and cooperative societies for his children's marriage and dairy farming activities. However, poor rainfall and repeated crop losses worsened his financial condition. Police said Nagappa went to his farmland after dinner on March 6 and consumed pesticide. His wife Huligemma has filed a complaint at the local police station. Authorities reminded the public that those facing distress can seek help by calling the Health Department helpline 104 or Tele-MANAS at 14416.

Inter-caste marriage clash leaves man seriously injured

Kukanur

Tension gripped Balageri village after a clash linked to an inter-caste marriage left one person seriously injured. A young man from the Lingayat community and a woman from the Barakera community had reportedly married a few days ago. On Sunday, relatives of the woman from Shantigiri-Itagi village in Gadag district allegedly arrived and created a disturbance. During a fight near a local garage, the father of the groom's friend sustained severe injuries and was admitted to Kukanur Government Hospital for treatment. Police have tightened security in the village and are monitoring the situation closely to maintain peace.

Contractors strike justified, says MLA Lakshman Savadi

Ramesh Savadi said contractors await ₹32,000 crore dues from Basavaraj Bommai's government, being cleared within two years alongside ongoing projects

CHIKKODI

The ongoing strike planned by contractors in the state is justified as many of them have been facing financial difficulties due to pending payments for the last several years, said MLA Lakshman Savadi.

Speaking to reporters after a foundation stone laying ceremony in Athani taluk of Belagavi district on Sunday, Savadi said contractors have been waiting for payments for nearly four to five years. He noted that about ₹32,000 crores in dues were left by the previous government led by Basavaraj Bommai. According to him, the present government is working to clear these dues within the next two years while continuing development projects.

Savadi also announced plans to establish an agricultural college in Athani. A detailed project report has already been prepared and a proposal worth ₹508 crores has been submitted to the government. The project will be taken up in two phases, beginning with the construction of classrooms, an administrative office and a hostel. Around 100 acres of land have been reserved for the college.

He said the state budget has also allocated funds to set up residential schools to support children of workers and economically weaker sections. The government has also announced plans to provide around 54,000 government jobs to address unemployment among youth. Praising the budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Savadi described it as a significant milestone for the state. He added that the government continues to implement development programmes despite reduced GST revenue from the Centre. Savadi also raised concerns over ethanol purchase policies and demanded fair treatment for farmers and industries in Karnataka.

Rane said the state's five guarantee schemes provide financial support and essential facilities, easing families' economic difficulties

Guarantee schemes helping reduce poverty, says Rane

KARWAR

Government guarantee schemes have played an important role in reducing poverty and strengthening the economic position of women, said Rajendra Rane during an International Women's Day programme held in Karwar on Sunday. The event was organised at the Taluk Panchayat Hall by the Taluk Panchayat Scheme Implementation Committee to mark International Women's Day and spread awareness about government welfare initiatives. Speaking after inaugurating the programme, Rane said the five guarantee schemes introduced by the state government have brought significant relief to families, especially women. He noted that these schemes provide direct financial support and basic facilities to households, helping many families overcome economic difficulties.

Under the Shakti Yojana, women can travel free of cost on state buses, enabling them to move across the state easily. Through the Griha Lakshmi Scheme, ₹2,000 is given every month to the woman head of each family. The Griha Jyoti Scheme provides up to 200 units of electricity free of charge, while the Anna Bhagya Scheme ensures that families receive food support.

Taluk Family Welfare Officer Dr. Ashwini Borakar said this year's Women's Day is celebrated with the theme "Give to Gain". She stressed that women should be given equal opportunities, respect and encouragement to contribute to the country's development. She also warned against illegal prenatal gender testing and said strict action would be taken against those involved. Informants who report such activities will receive rewards while their identities remain confidential.

During the programme, women beneficiaries shared how the schemes helped them start small businesses and support their families. Competitions and cultural activities were also organised, and beneficiaries were felicitated for their achievements.

Marksheet glitch shows 1,163 marks out of 700

BALLARI

A major technical error in the marksheets issued by Sri Krishnadevaraya University has created confusion among students and parents after some students were awarded marks far above the maximum limit. The issue came to light when BBA third semester students noticed unusually high scores printed on their marksheets.

In the BBA course, students study seven subjects, each carrying a maximum of 100 marks, making the total maximum score 700. However, some marksheets showed impossible scores such as 996, 1,080, 1,100, 840 and even 1,163 marks. The error was found in the marksheets of eight students studying at SGT Degree College.

Students reportedly discovered the mistake after receiving their marksheets from the college. The unusual scores quickly raised questions about the accuracy of the university's examination and evaluation system. Concerned parents and students demanded clarification from the university authorities regarding the issue.

Serve nation with dedication, RSS leader urges

DHARWAD

The spirit of serving the nation should be present in every citizen along with love and dedication towards the country, said Raghunandanji during a Hindu Sammelan held in Amminabavi village of Dharwad taluk.

He spoke as the chief guest at the programme organised as part of the centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The event was conducted at the premises of Srisansthan Panchagriha Hiremath under the joint auspices of Amminabavi and Kanakura mandals.

Raghunandanji said service to the country should begin from one's own village. He urged youth to work towards building villages free from harmful substances such as gutka, liquor and plastic. According to him, maintaining cleanliness and protecting the environment are also forms of national service.He also said people should always keep the nation first and protect its dignity. At the same time, society should remain open to positive change. Elders in families should take responsibility to pass on the values of Indian culture and traditions to younger generations, he added.The programme was presided over by Gurumurthy Yaragambalimath, retired editor of the Kannada monthly magazine Jeevan Shikshan. Speaking on the occasion, he said that truth, non-violence and a noble lifestyle are essential for building harmony in society. He noted that when people recognize the divine presence in every living being and respect humanity, conflicts can be reduced and peace can prevail everywhere.

Earlier, a colourful Shobha Yatra featuring more than 50 decorated chakkadis carrying portraits of national heroes was taken out. The procession was inaugurated by Shantaliga Shivacharya Swamiji of Amminabavi Panchagriha Hiremath.

ASSISTIVE CARE DRIVE

Free artificial limb camp benefits disabled in Haveri

HAVERI

A large free artificial arm and leg fitting camp held in Haveri helped many persons with disabilities receive essential support and mobility aids. The three-day camp concluded at Rotary Bhavan in Rajendra Nagar with participation from several service organisations.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Rotary International President Kashinath Aravath said Rotary continues to work for social welfare and public service. He noted that the camp was organised with the cooperation of many organisations and volunteers, which helped ensure its success.

The camp was conducted in collaboration with ADD Foundation, Rotary Club, Inner Wheel Club, Rotaract, Haveri Karnataka Jain Association, Karnataka Marwari Youth Federation, the Indian Red Cross Society and the District Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled. Organisers said the initiative aimed to support people with disabilities by providing artificial limbs free of cost.

ADD Foundation head Dev Shethi and Vanitha Shethi from Bengaluru inaugurated the programme by fitting artificial limbs to beneficiaries. Speaking on the occasion, Shethi said

the foundation is committed to improving the lives of persons with disabilities through service and rehabilitation support.

He thanked volunteers and partner organisations for helping conduct the camp and expressed hope that similar programmes would be organised in the future to assist more people in need.

Jain Association State Executive Board

member S.A. Vajrakumar said such service camps are organised

with the aim of helping the community and encouraging social responsibility.

Banjara community opposes internal reservation policy

Venkatesh Pandurang Pammara said internal reservation debates have caused hardships for Scheduled Castes, with some sub-categories reportedly denied posts in universities, health, and government departments

HUBBALLI

Leaders of the Banjara community have urged the state government not to implement internal reservation within the Scheduled Castes in what they described as an impractical and unfair manner. They have demanded that government job recruitment and educational admissions should continue under the previous reservation system.

In a press release issued to the media, Banjara Samaj youth leader Venkatesh Pandurang Pammara said the ongoing debate over internal reservation has already created difficulties for several Scheduled Caste groups in the state. According to him, recent recruitment processes in institutions such as agricultural universities, health departments and other government bodies have reportedly not allocated posts to certain Scheduled Caste sub-categories.

He stated that communities such as Banjara, Bhovi, Korama, Korach, Bhajantri and Dombar have expressed concern over the situation, fearing that the new classification system may reduce their opportunities in education and employment. Many students from these communities are waiting for job notifications, and delays in recruitment have added to their worries.

Community representatives have welcomed the state government's recent announcement that recruitment and admission processes may continue according to the earlier reservation rules until further decisions are taken. They have urged the authorities to issue recruitment notifications immediately so that deserving candidates can apply for government jobs.

The leaders also called for wider consultation before making any major changes to the reservation system. They said community leaders should be involved in discussions related to internal reservation to ensure fairness and transparency.

The press release also noted that the issue is currently under legal consideration, and implementing policy changes before a final court decision could create administrative and legal complications.

The Banjara community has therefore appealed to the government to continue recruitment and admission processes under the earlier reservation framework to avoid confusion and protect opportunities for students and job seekers.

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Students reportedly discovered the mistake after receiving their marksheets from the college. The unusual scores quickly raised questions about the accuracy of the university's examination and evaluation system. Concerned parents and students demanded clarification from the university authorities regarding the issue. Responding to the controversy, Evaluation Registrar N. M. Sali said the problem occurred due to a technical error during the marksheet printing process. He assured that the mistake has been identified and that the affected marksheets will be corrected soon. University officials said the faulty documents would be reprinted and distributed to students after proper verification. The incident has once again raised concerns about administrative errors in the university's examination system and the need for stricter verification procedures before issuing official academic records.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT KEY TO NATION'S PROGRESS: JUDGE

DAVANAGERE

Women's empowerment and education are essential for the overall development of the country, said Vela D.K. during an International Women's Day programme held in Davanagere on Sunday.

The event was organised at Guru Bhavan by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, District Legal Services Authority, District Police Department and the Women and Child Development Department. Speaking on the occasion, the judge said women today are moving forward in many fields due to the opportunities provided through education and legal rights.

He noted that in the past women had limited access to education, but today education has become a powerful tool for their empowerment. Referring to the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and B. R. Ambedkar, he said women should develop the ability to solve their own problems and make independent decisions.

The judge also highlighted the importance of legal reforms such as the Hindu Code Bill which helped secure property and other rights for women. He said the leadership of Indira Gandhi inspired many women to participate in public life and politics.

QUICK READ

Health worker dies suddenly from heart attack

Hassan

In the early hours of Sunday, Devanand (42), a driver with the Health Department for 15 years, died of a heart attack while sleeping at his home in Gavenahalli village, Hassan. His family rushed him to the hospital, where doctors confirmed his death. Devanand, also known for acting in several mythological dramas, is survived by his mother, wife, and two children. The family is grieving the sudden loss. Villagers and colleagues remembered him for his dedication to work and contributions to local cultural programs. His untimely death has deeply saddened the community.

Youth found hanging near Raibag forest

Belagavi

In a shocking incident, the body of a 32-year-old man, Lakshmana Hirigowda of Jokanatti village, Moodalagi taluk, was found hanging from a tree near Vyapari Lake on the outskirts of Raibag town. Locals discovered the body in a forested area on Sunday and immediately informed the police. Raibag police reached the scene, conducted an investigation, and registered a case. Further inquiries are ongoing to determine the circumstances leading to the death. Authorities have urged residents to remain vigilant and assist in the investigation if they have any information.

Lineman Day celebrated honouring power department workers

Hunsur

Lineman Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at the Hunsur Electricity Sub-Division to recognise the dedicated service of electricity department workers who ensure uninterrupted power supply to the public. The program highlighted the crucial role played by linemen in maintaining electrical infrastructure and serving the community.

Social worker and GSS founder Srihari D attended the event as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he said electricity department employees often work under difficult conditions and receive more criticism than appreciation. He advised them to take care of their health and well-being, noting that their contribution to building and supporting society is extremely important.

During the event, Shankar Shetty honoured the linemen and symbolically celebrated Lineman Day by cutting a cake along with other guests.

BJP leaders slam Budget for ignoring development

MLAs Abhay Patil and Balachandra Jarkiholi criticized the Budget for heavy debt, unrealistic promises, neglecting North Karnataka

BELAGAVI

Several leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party have criticised the State Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, saying it focuses more on guarantee schemes than on long term development.

MLA Abhay Patil said the Budget has pushed the State into heavy debt while offering thousands of unrealistic promises. According to him, the financial plan lacks a clear roadmap for development and has disappointed the expectations of common people across Karnataka. Another MLA, Balachandra Jarkiholi, said the Budget appears to have been prepared mainly to manage funds for the Congress guarantee schemes. He alleged that the government has placed an additional financial burden on people while failing to show strong development plans.

He also claimed that the State Treasury appears to be facing a shortage of funds, which has resulted in a Budget with little focus on growth or progress. Jarkiholi further said that the Budget seems to give more importance to cities like Bengaluru and Mysuru, while regions in North Karnataka have been neglected.

He pointed out that there are no major announcements for tourism or irrigation development in North Karnataka and no special package for farmers. He also said sugarcane growers have been ignored and earlier promises made in previous Budgets have not been mentioned.

Former MLC Mahantesh Kavatagimath said the Budget gives more importance to vote bank politics than overall development. Out of the total ₹4.48 lakh crore Budget, more than ₹51,600 crores have been set aside for guarantee schemes. He said welfare programmes are important, but the Budget lacks clear plans for job creation, industrial investment, infrastructure growth and increasing farmers income across the State.

Kharge slams LPG price rise on Women's Day

KALABURAGI

The minister said Karnataka's five guarantee schemes promote dignity and financial security, returning public money through welfare programs

Karnataka Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge criticized the Central Government for increasing cooking gas prices on International Women's Day, calling it an example of "Acche Din" in a sarcastic tone.

He made the remarks while speaking at a foundation stone laying and inauguration programme for development works worth about ₹1,069 crores in Chittapur town on Sunday. According to the minister, raising the price of LPG cylinders on a day meant to celebrate women sends a wrong message to households across the country.

Kharge said the increase would directly affect families, especially women who manage household expenses and cooking. He questioned the timing of the price hike and said such decisions place an additional burden on common people.

The minister also highlighted the welfare measures introduced by the Karnataka government. He said the five guarantee schemes implemented by the state government have helped people live with dignity and financial security. According to him, these schemes return public money to the people through welfare programmes.

Kharge further said that some political leaders criticize these guarantees, but the government believes public funds should benefit citizens.

He added that farmers in Kalaburagi district have received significant support from the state.

He stated that in the last two and a half years, around ₹2,590 crores in compensation has been provided to nearly 15.5 lakh farmers in the district. This assistance, he said, has helped farmers recover from various hardships.

Kharge thanked the people for their continued support and said he would continue to work for development. He also remarked that as long as the people of Chittapur support him, he is not worried about political challenges.

The event was attended by Mallikarjun Kharge, D. K. Shivakumar and other leaders.

Activists said labourers await minimum wage revisions, with existing systems continuing until new tribunals under 2020 labour codes form

CITU urges MLA to press for implementation of minimum wages

RAICHUR

Activists of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions submitted a memorandum to Manappa Vajjal urging him to press the State government to implement minimum wages to ensure economic security for lakhs of workers from weaker sections.

The activists stated that lakhs of labourers working in unorganised, small and medium manufacturing units across Karnataka are still waiting for the revision and implementation of minimum wages. Though the State government had initiated the process to review minimum wages, it has remained pending, they said. The memorandum also referred to the notification issued by the Central government under Section 104(1A) of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020. According to the notification, even though the new labour codes have been enacted, the existing system will continue until new industrial tribunals and other authorities are constituted.They pointed out that the notification issued in November 2025 has received presidential assent, giving it legal validity. Therefore, they demanded that the Centre and State governments frame rules under the new labour codes and ensure that existing labour tribunals and labour department authorities continue to function until new institutions are formed. The activists urged the MLA to raise the issue in the Assembly session and press the government to announce minimum wages for workers at the earliest.

Taluk convener Mohammed Hanif, Ningappa Veerapur, Allahbaksh, Penchalayya Sridhar, Kamala Mudgal, Anjinayya Venkatesh, Shainaz Begum and Siddamma Babajani were present.

Lawyer Asif Ali honoured during Koppal Urs

KOPPAL

During the Urs celebrations at Dargah Hazrat Raja Bagh Savaar in Koppal, the Muslim community gathered to mark the occasion with devotion and festivity. Senior lawyer Asif Ali, recently appointed as a senior member of the RTI section of the All India Congress Committee, was felicitated by the Dargah Committee for his achievements.

The program was presided over by Dargah Committee President Maula Hussain Jamedar. Alongside Asif Ali, senior society leaders including Bhasoosab Katib, and PSIs from Koppal Nagar Sanchari Station, Venkatesh Nayak and Bhanu Begum, were also honored.

Many prominent figures from the community, including Koppal Congress President Cotton Pasha, Panch Committee Union President Babusab Makandar, senior Congress leaders, retired officials, and local businessmen, attended the event.

Students should participate in competitions without fear of failure: Pattadevaru

BHALKI

Gurubasava Pattadevaru advised students to participate in competitions without worrying about victory or defeat and to use such opportunities to showcase their talents.

He was speaking while inaugurating the final rounds of various competitions organised under the aegis of the Hiremath Sansthan Vidyapeeth Trust at Kumbara Gundayya Kalyana Mantapa. The events were held as part of the celebrations of Basavanna Jayanti, the 2026 Vachana Jatra, the 27th memorial of Dr. Channabasava Pattadevaru and the Amrit Mahotsav of Dr. Basavalinga Pattadevaru.

Gurubasava Pattadevaru said that organising such competitions on the occasion of Dr. Basavalinga Pattadevaru's Amrit Mahotsav has provided a valuable platform for students to express their abilities. He urged the younger generation to learn about the educational, social and humanitarian contributions of the revered leaders and shape themselves into responsible citizens.

He also advised students to study Vachana literature along with their academic subjects in order to develop moral values and cultural awareness. The life messages and ideals of the spiritual leaders should serve as inspiration

for students in their lives, he added.

Dr. Rajkumar Hebbale also addressed the gathering and stressed the importance of learning Vachana literature to cultivate disciplined and value-based lives.

The programme was held in the presence of Prabhulinga Swamiji and Shivabasava Swamiji, while M. Bandappa Sharanu presided over the function.

Several dignitaries, including Shambuling Kamanna, Mallamma R. Patil, Shubhangi Channabasavanna Balate, Chandrakant Haibatpure, Vilas Bakka, Shankar Patil, Dr. Sajjal Balate, Mallamma Naganakere, Suvarna Ballure and others

were present. Basav Guru Puja was performed by Shikhareshwar Shetkar.

District exhibition promotes women entrepreneurship in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA

District Commissioner K. Ananda expressed hope that women should progress in all sectors and become economically strong while speaking at the inauguration of the District-Level Exhibition and Sales Fair–2026 in Vijayapura. The exhibition was jointly organised by the Vijayapura Zilla Panchayat, the Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission, and the Department of Women and Child Development. The event aimed to support rural women entrepreneurs and encourage them to participate in income-generating activities.

During the exhibition, products made by women from Self-Help Groups were displayed and sold. The District Commissioner visited different stalls, observed the wide variety of handmade products and appreciated the creativity and hard work of the women entrepreneurs. He encouraged them to expand their businesses and strengthen their financial independence. Women entrepreneurs from Self-Help Groups representing all 13 taluks of Vijayapura district took part in the fair. The event provided an important platform for rural women to showcase their products and connect with customers. On the occasion of International Women's Day, Krishi Sakhis and Pashu Sakhis who have been performing well at the Gram Panchayat level under the NRLM scheme were also honoured for their service. Deputy Director K. K. Chavan, Assistant Planning Officer Arun Kumar Dalwai and other officials attended the program.

SDMC members receive training on rights awareness

HUNSUR

An awareness and training program for School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) members was organised at the Government Higher Primary School in Hunsur city under the Southern Cluster. The program aimed to educate SDMC members about their rights, duties, and role in improving school management and development.

The event was inaugurated by lighting a lamp by headmaster Suresh. Speaking on the occasion, he explained that SDMC committees are formed every three years by selecting parent representatives and members through proper procedures. He said the committee plays an important role in ensuring better enrollment of students, protecting school property, and supporting teachers in their work.Suresh also highlighted the importance of community participation in education. He noted that cooperation from parents, donors, and local residents is essential for the development of rural schools. He added that the SDMC committee helps strengthen the connection between schools and communities while promoting awareness about the value of education among parents.

Headmistress Rajeshwari also addressed the gathering and explained the responsibilities of SDMC members, including monitoring school development grants, overseeing repair and maintenance works, and supporting basic education activities.

EDUCATE, EMPOWER, ELEVATE

Women's progress key for nation's growth, say Leaders

SHIVAMOGGA

The message that the progress of women is equal to the progress of the nation echoed strongly during the International Women's Day 2026 celebration held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan on Sunday.

The programme was organised under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Women and Child Development Department. Legislative Council MLA Balkish Banu inaugurated the event and spoke about the importance of women's education and family support.

She said society begins at home, and when women receive encouragement and opportunities there, they can achieve great success. According to her, education has played a major role in helping women reach new heights in different fields, from agriculture to industry.

Banu also recalled the struggles of women workers in 1908 who fought for their rights. Their efforts later led to the recognition of International Women's Day across the world.

MLA Dr. Dhananjaya Sarji said women possess unique strength and patience. He noted that women manage homes, care for children and also contribute to society in many professional roles. Because of this dedication, mothers hold a special place in society.

He encouraged women to spend some time each day for their personal interests and hobbies to maintain balance in life. He also stressed the importance of teaching children values such as kindness and sharing.

Karnataka State SC/ST Nomad Development Corporation President Pallavi highlighted the contributions of great reformers like Basavanna, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Savitribai Phule in promoting women's rights and education.

QUICK READ

Three accused arrested for daytime chain snatching

RAMANAGARA

Kudur police in Magadi taluk arrested three people—Prabhu (39), Vasanthi (37), and Jyoti (32)—for snatching gold chains in three locations on March 3. The gang approached devotees heading to Muneshwara Swamy Rathotsava, asked for directions, and stole their chains before escaping. Police recovered three gold chains weighing 112 grams and the Wagoner car used in the crimes. Investigations revealed that the accused were involved in seven theft cases. The trio has been remanded to judicial custody. Authorities urged the public to remain cautious while interacting with strangers in crowded areas.

Lemon prices soar, shoppers feeling the pinch

CHITRADURGA

Lemon prices have surged sharply in Chitradurga amid rising summer temperatures. At the city Sunday market, regular lemons cost Rs 8–10 each, while larger ones fetch up to Rs 15. Soft drink stalls have also raised lemonade prices from Rs 25 to Rs 30. Lemons in the city come from Hubballi, Savanur, and Vijayapura, with wholesale prices at Rs 6,000 per bag containing 1,200–1,500 lemons. Traders say summer demand and low yields push prices up, and further increases are expected in April and May. Consumers are urged to plan purchases accordingly.

3 killed after car rams lorry on B'luru–Kanakapura road

RAMANAGARA

A tragic accident occurred near Agar Cross in Kaggalipura on the Bengaluru-Kanakapura road at 3 am on Sunday, when a car carrying four friends hit a moving lorry from behind. Three passengers—Syed Pasha (22), Yunif Ban (23), and Azhar Pasha (22)—died on the spot. The fourth, Faraj, sustained serious injuries and is receiving treatment at a private hospital in Bengaluru. The car was completely damaged in the collision. Kaggalipura police investigated the scene, and the bodies have been sent to Rajarajeshwari Hospital for postmortem. Authorities are urging drivers to exercise caution on highways.

Ayushman scheme provides free treatment for poor

Bommai highlighted Jan Aushadhi Kendras, offering medicines at ₹20 versus ₹100 in private pharmacies, making healthcare affordable

SAVANUR

Former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai said the Ayushman health scheme ensures free medical treatment up to ₹5 lakhs for poor families across the country.

He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for the construction of an Ayushman Health Centre at Hiremugadur village in Savanur taluk. Bommai said the scheme was launched in 2017 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help people who struggle to afford proper medical treatment.

According to him, the central government bears the cost of treatment under the scheme, ensuring that poor families receive necessary healthcare services without financial burden. He said the initiative has become a major support system for economically weaker sections.

Bommai also highlighted the importance of Jan Aushadhi Kendras, which provide medicines at much lower prices compared to regular medical stores.

He explained that medicines costing about ₹100 in private pharmacies are available for nearly ₹20 at these centres.

He urged the state government to establish Jan Aushadhi Kendras near all hospitals so that people can easily access affordable medicines.

Bommai also stressed the need for cooperation among different levels of administration to ensure development in villages.

He said institutions such as Gram Panchayats, Taluk and District administrations, along with MLAs and MPs, should work together to improve rural infrastructure and services. "Let us focus on development for most of the time and keep politics aside," he said.

Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker Rudrappa Lamani said cooperation between the state and central governments is essential for development. He added that the village will be developed as a model with support from officials and residents.

Several local leaders, officials and villagers attended the programme.

Guarantee schemes boost women's economic independence: Patil

GADAG

Patil said guarantee schemes strengthen families and empower women, suggesting future discussions on recognizing them as basic human rights due to their life-improving impact.

Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister H. K. Patil said the state government's five guarantee schemes are helping women become economically independent and are playing a key role in reducing poverty.

He was speaking while presiding over the International Women's Day programme organised by the Gadag Taluk Guarantee Scheme Implementation Authority at the Gadag Cotton Sale Society on Sunday.

Patil said the government has introduced the guarantee schemes to strengthen families and empower women financially.

He added that in the future there should even be discussions on recognising such welfare schemes as basic human rights because of their importance in improving people's lives.

He recalled that social reformer Basavanna fought for equality and freedom for women in the 12th century. According to him, the ideas of equality promoted by Basavanna continue to inspire society even today.

Speaking at the event, Rona MLA and Chairman of Karnataka State Mineral Development Corporation G. S. Patil said respecting women has always been part of Indian culture. He noted that women today are contributing actively in different fields and playing important roles in society.

Patil also referred to the leadership of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as an inspiration for women in public life.

District Guarantee Scheme Implementation Authority Chairman B.B. Asuti said that about ₹2,130 crores has been provided to Gadag district through various guarantee schemes. He explained that this includes funds under programmes such as Grihalakshmi, Annabhagya, Shakti and Yuvanidhi Beneficiaries of the schemes shared their experiences and explained how the initiatives helped them support their families and improve their livelihoods.

Shettar said drought-hit farmers lacked relief, criticizing 56,432 government recruitments and age relaxation as election gimmicks

Shettar calls state budget directionless and misleading

BELAGAVI

Jagadish Shettar, BJP MP from Belagavi, on Sunday criticised the State Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, calling it directionless and misleading. He said the Budget has failed to address the real needs of common people, farmers, and development sectors across Karnataka.

Speaking to reporters in Belagavi, Shettar said the government has increased the total Budget size to ₹4.48 lakh crore, but a large share of the money will come through loans. According to him, this rising borrowing will place a heavy financial burden on the next generation.

He also alleged that the government has not set aside enough funds for important areas such as irrigation, Public Works, and infrastructure development. Instead, the Budget mainly focuses on guarantee schemes, while long term development plans have been ignored.

Shettar further said farmers facing drought and flood problems have not received any loan waiver or special relief package in the Budget. He also questioned the announcement of recruitment for 56,432 government posts and the relaxation of age limits, calling them election gimmicks.

He claimed that similar promises were made earlier but were not fully implemented. The BJP leader also expressed doubts about large projects such as the Bengaluru Tunnel Road and the proposed Business Corridor. He said the Budget does not clearly explain how the government plans to arrange the huge funds required for these projects.

BJP MLA Shashikala Jolle also criticised the Budget, describing it as a zero growth plan that could push the State towards heavy debt.

Former MP Anna Saheb Jolle said the Budget would only increase taxes and financial pressure on people across the state today widely.

Kolar farmer leader dies after car falls into lake

KOLAR

Kolar district was shaken when T.M. Venkatesh, the district president of Prana Raitha Sangha and district secretary of the Communist Party, tragically died after his car accidentally fell into a lake.

Venkatesh was returning home after working late into the night to prepare for the 18th state conference of the Karnataka Prana Raitha Sangha, scheduled to be held in Kolar from March 9 to 11. The accident occurred around 12:45 a.m. while he was on the way to his hometown.

Following the incident, his body was taken to Kolar SNR District Hospital for a postmortem examination. Later, his last rites were performed in his native village of Turandahalli in the evening.

Leaders from the Communist Party and local farmer organizations expressed deep grief over his sudden death. District leaders Suryanarayana, Gandhinagar Narayanaswamy, V. Geetha, KGF Thangaraj, Srinivasan, Vijaykrishna, and Naveen Patakote, along with other farmer and Dalit community leaders, conveyed condolences and paid tribute to Venkatesh's contributions. Venkatesh was known for his tireless work for farmers' welfare and active participation in district-level organizational activities. His sudden death has left a void in the local farmer community and political circles, with many remembering him as a dedicated leader who worked day and night for the benefit of farmers.

Five guarantee schemes boost economic self-reliance

NAVALGUND

The Panch Guarantee Schemes implemented by the state government are helping poor families become financially strong and self-reliant, said Taluk Implementation Committee Chairman Vardhamanagouda Hiregowda.

He was speaking during a review meeting held at the Taluk Panchayat, where he highlighted how these government schemes improve the standard of living for people in the state.

The schemes provide financial support and opportunities that enable beneficiaries to strengthen their income and livelihoods. Chairman Hiregowda also addressed concerns about the Grihalakshmi scheme. He stressed that eligible beneficiaries should not face unnecessary cancellations. "If there are wealthy people enrolled in the scheme, they should be identified and removed.

However, careful verification must ensure that genuine beneficiaries continue to receive support," he said.

The meeting was attended by P.R. Badekhanavar, along with members of the Guarantee Committee, Kallappa Talavai and Eranna Angadi. Discussions focused on improving implementation, addressing grievances, and ensuring that the benefits reach the deserving people.

These five guarantee schemes are part of the government's broader effort to empower citizens economically and reduce dependency. Officials emphasized the need for careful monitoring to prevent misuse while maximizing support for the poor and needy.

Students learn leadership at model Yuva Sabha

SAKLESHPUR

A model youth gram sabha was recently held at Udevara Government High School in Sakleshpur taluk of Hassan district to encourage leadership, social awareness, and responsibility among students.

During the programme, students actively participated by taking on roles of Gram Sabha Presidents, members, and public representatives. They discussed important local issues such as village development, cleanliness, education, and environmental protection. The initiative aimed to give students practical knowledge about the Gram Panchayat system and the significance of the Gram Sabha.

Udevara Gram Panchayat Development Officer Sahitya appreciated the programme, saying the students' disciplined approach and thoughtful questions set a model for all Gram Panchayats. "The involvement and curiosity shown by students reflect their understanding of community issues," he added.

School Headmaster Dr. H.N. Krishnamurthy emphasized the importance of such exercises. "When students develop leadership qualities and the courage to ask questions, society will have responsible leaders in the future. These programmes instill social responsibility and awareness from a young age," he said. The event was attended by the Gram Panchayat President, members, teachers, students, and local villagers, creating an interactive platform for learning civic duties.

Woman remarries 20 days after husband's death

TUMAKURU

A shocking twist has emerged in Dasarahalli village, Tumakuru, where a woman allegedly killed her husband and remarried just 20 days after his death.

The deceased, Paramesh, had died on January 30, with his death initially reported as a heart attack.

Paramesh's wife, Asha, had been married to him for 10 years. Following his cremation, Asha quickly remarried a man named Chandrappa on February 17, raising suspicions among Paramesh's relatives. His sister, Nagamma, lodged a complaint with the police, prompting a formal investigation.

The authorities exhumed Paramesh's body on February 24 and conducted a postmortem. Police discovered that Asha and Chandrappa had conspired to murder him.

Both have been arrested and sent to jail, while the investigation continues to identify and apprehend any additional accomplices.

Tumakuru SP K.V. Ashok confirmed that a murder case has been registered and the probe is ongoing to uncover the full details of this shocking crime.

WATER CRISIS LOOMS

Neglect stalls Maradur lift irrigation project work

HUNSUR

Residents and farmers of Kebbe Koppalu village have expressed concern over the delay in linking the Maradur Kebbe Koppalu Lift Irrigation Project to the nearby lake, alleging negligence by public representatives and officials.

According to villagers, work on the lift irrigation project is being carried out under the Harangi Baladande Canal of the Hunsur sub-division in Hunsur taluk. However, Kebbe Koppalu Lake, which is located barely 500 meters from the project site, has not been connected to the irrigation system.

Due to this, the lake has completely dried up, creating serious difficulties for people, livestock and birds in the area. With summer already setting in, villagers fear that the water shortage will worsen in the coming weeks.

Farmers say that if the lake is connected to the lift irrigation project, it can be filled throughout the year. This would not only provide water for drinking and farming but also help increase the groundwater level and improve water availability in borewells across the village.

Local residents also alleged that several lakes across the taluk have not been properly filled through lift irrigation projects. They claim that timely implementation of such projects would prevent water shortages for farmers and cattle. Villagers criticized public representatives for visiting villages mainly during election periods and not paying adequate attention to development works later.

They have urged officials of the Harangi Baladande Canal Hunsur sub-division to take immediate steps to connect Kebbe Koppalu Lake to the Maradur lift irrigation project and ensure water supply. Residents warned that if action is not taken soon, farmers from the region will organise a protest in front of the Hunsur subdivision office demanding a solution.

QUICK READ

Air India to operate 78 extra flights on 9 routes amid Mideast conflict

NEW DELHI

Indian carrier Air India announced on Sunday that it will operate 78 additional flights on nine routes between March 10 and March 18, 2026, to support passengers amid the ongoing situation in West Asia. The carrier is deploying extra capacity to New York (JFK), London (Heathrow), Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam, Zurich, Colombo and Malé, adding 17,660 seats on the nine routes in both directions, the release from Air India said. The trips include Delhi-New York (JFK), Delhi-London (Heathrow), Mumbai-London (Heathrow) for boosting much-needed capacity when travel options for passengers remain constrained, it said.

Ananda Bose breaks silence on exit as Bengal Governor

KOLKATA

Former West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Sunday said his resignation from the post was a conscious decision and the reasons behind it would remain confidential till the right time. Speaking to reporters after arriving at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata, Bose said he would return to West Bengal again to cast his vote. Bose, a native of Kerala, had shifted his voting base to West Bengal barely a week before tendering his resignation from office. I took a conscious decision to put in my papers, the reasons for which will remain confidential till the right time arrives. The rules of this game include knowing when it ends, said Bose.

Man killed while wife, son injured in MP road accident

Bhopal

A 36-year-old man was killed, while his wife and six-year-old son were seriously injured in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district on Sunday. The incident occurred near the Jhi Tapa junction on the busy Betul-Nagpur National Highway. According to police officials, a speeding container truck suddenly lost control, smashed through the road divider, and veered onto the opposite lane. The vehicle collided head-on with a motorcycle carrying Vikas Rao (36), a resident of Narmadapuram (also known as Hoshangabad), his wife, and their young son.

Northeast seeing faster economic activity due to connectivity push: VP

'Initiatives under PM Modi have significantly improved connectivity and infrastructure in the Northeast, boosting economic growth across the region'

AGARTHALA

Addressing students and faculty members at the convocation ceremony, the Vice President said that initiatives undertaken by the government under the leadership of Narendra Modi have significantly improved connectivity and infrastructure in the Northeast, boosting economic growth across the region.

The northeastern region comprises eight states and has seen notable improvements in transportation and tourism infrastructure in recent years.

Radhakrishnan referred to the foundation stone laying of the ₹450-crore Matabari Tourism Circuit in Tripura earlier this year by Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Jyotiraditya Scindia. The project aims to strengthen tourism infrastructure and promote cultural heritage sites in the state. He also mentioned the redevelopment and inauguration of the historic Mata Tripura Sundari Temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 22 last year. The temple, located in Udaipur, is one of the 51 revered Hindu Shakti Peethas and attracts devotees from across the country. According to the Vice President, the redevelopment of the temple and related tourism infrastructure has led to a sharp rise in the number of visitors. He noted that while earlier around 3.5 lakh devotees visited the temple annually, the number has now increased to nearly 8.5 lakh after the recent development works. Earlier in the day, Radhakrishnan visited the temple and offered prayers for peace, prosperity, and well-being. The visit was also shared through a post on his official social media handle.

Speaking further, the Vice President said that the proposed tourism circuit would also include the ancient rock-carving site of Chabimura in Gomati district—often referred to as the Mini Amazon of India—as well as Dumboor Lake, where the scenic location known as Narkel Kunj is situated. He expressed confidence that these initiatives would place Tripura prominently on the global tourism map.

During his address, Radhakrishnan also urged young people to stay away from drug abuse, warning that drugs could severely damage their future and social life.

Women empowerment key to self-reliance: Yogi

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that empowering women is essential for building a self-reliant society.

Addressing a gathering here on the occasion of International Women's Day 2026, Adityanath, referring to the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said that no society can become self-reliant or truly empowered by ignoring half of its population.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly says that a society cannot move forward by neglecting half of its population, he said.

Highlighting the Centre's initiatives for women, he recalled that after assuming office in 2014, the Prime Minister launched the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao programme to promote the protection and education of girls across the country. The Chief Minister added that several other initiatives, including the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, were introduced to strengthen women's empowerment and welfare. Due to such programmes, he said, daughters across the country are steadily moving forward on the path of self-reliance.

Adityanath also noted that in the coming years, women will have greater representation in governance. Soon, daughters and sisters will be elected to 33 per cent of the seats in state assemblies and Parliament, a provision that has already been ensured by Prime Minister Modi, he said.

About women's safety in Uttar Pradesh, the Chief Minister said that the state government has taken concrete steps to ensure a secure environment for girls and women.

When I travel across Uttar Pradesh, I see daughters going to school without fear or hesitation.

Patel flags off water distribution station, AMC sub-zonal office in Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD

The Chief Minister inaugurated a newly constructed water distribution station in the Ghatlodia ward of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in the city's North-West Zone.

The project, built at a cost of ₹55.31 crore, has been developed to strengthen water supply infrastructure and meet the growing demand in the area.

The facility includes a large underground water tank equipped with a pump house that has a storage capacity of 250 lakh litres. In addition, an overhead tank with a capacity of 25 lakh litres has also been constructed as part of the project. Officials said the upgraded system is expected to significantly improve water distribution in the locality.

According to civic authorities, the new infrastructure will ensure better water supply with adequate pressure for residents living in the Ghatlodia area. The project is expected to benefit an estimated population of around 1.25 lakh people residing across nearly four square kilometres, improving both accessibility and reliability of drinking water.

During the event, Chief Minister Patel also inaugurated the newly built Bodakdev Sub-Zonal Office of the AMC. The administrative facility has been named after the late Bansibhai Pranlal Patel, a renowned photographer who lived from 1910 to 2014 and was widely recognised for capturing historic images of national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Officials said the modern sub-zonal office has been developed to improve administrative efficiency and provide greater convenience to residents in the western parts of the city. With the establishment of the facility, people living in Bodakdev and surrounding areas will now be able to access municipal services locally without having to travel to the main zonal office.

The initiatives are part of the state government's ongoing efforts to strengthen urban infrastructure, improve public services, and ensure more efficient civic administration in rapidly growing urban centres like Ahmedabad.

Ch'garh CM transfers 25th installment of Mahtari Vandan Yojana to 69L women

RAIPUR

During the event, the Chief Minister released the installment with a single click from the Sammelan venue, sending financial assistance directly to the accounts of eligible married women across the state.

The latest installment was described by officials as a step toward promoting financial security, self-reliance, and empowerment among women in Chhattisgarh.

The Mahtari Vandan Yojana, launched by the state government, provides monthly financial assistance of ₹1,000 to eligible married women. The scheme ensures an annual benefit of ₹12,000, aimed at strengthening women's financial independence and helping families manage essential household expenses.

According to official data, the consistent release of funds under the scheme highlights the government's focus on transparent and timely delivery of welfare benefits. Earlier in February this year, Chief Minister Sai had transferred ₹6,41,34,00,000 as part of the 24th installment to beneficiaries across the state. With the latest transfer, the total amount disbursed under the Mahtari Vandan Yojana has reached ₹1,62,37,33,00,000. The programme currently benefits nearly 70 lakh women across Chhattisgarh, making it one of the state's largest direct welfare initiatives aimed at women's empowerment.

The event in Jagdalpur, located in the Bastar region, witnessed enthusiastic participation from beneficiaries and local residents. Officials noted that the scheme has successfully reached women even in remote and tribal areas, ensuring inclusive welfare coverage.

TMC has failed to address key issues: Anurag Thakur

KOLKATA

Speaking to a large crowd in Naihati, located in North 24 Parganas district, Anurag Thakur criticised the Trinamool Congress government and alleged that the state administration was failing to address key issues affecting the people of West Bengal.

During his speech, Thakur claimed that while Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee opposes Droupadi Murmu, the President of India, she allegedly allows infiltrators and criminal elements to enter the state. He used strong words to criticise the Chief Minister, alleging that she was functioning as a protector of mafias, extremists, and illegal infiltrators rather than as the head of the state government.

The BJP leader argued that in order to safeguard the identity and resources of Bengal, the current government led by the All India Trinamool Congress must be replaced by a BJP administration. According to him, the upcoming Assembly elections in the state will be crucial for protecting Bengali pride, culture, and the state's future.

Thakur also raised the issue of illegal infiltration from Bangladesh, alleging that it has been continuing for many years. He claimed that successive governments—from the Indian National Congress to the Communists and now the Trinamool Congress—have allegedly allowed infiltration because it serves as a vote bank that helps them win elections.

CM Stalin launches Rs 45 cr civic, welfare initiatives

CHENNAI

The projects launched by the Chief Minister include a range of civic infrastructure works designed to enhance basic amenities and strengthen public welfare in the constituency.

Officials said the initiatives focus on improving roads, drainage systems, public facilities, and other essential services in several localities within Kolathur.

During the event, Stalin emphasised the importance of upgrading urban infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing population in the state capital. He noted that such development works are part of the government's broader commitment to ensure better living conditions and efficient civic services for residents.

The projects, collectively valued at more than ₹45 crore, are expected to benefit thousands of people living in the Kolathur constituency. The works include improvements to local infrastructure and the implementation of welfare measures aimed at strengthening community facilities.

The Chief Minister also interacted with local residents and officials during the inauguration, reviewing the progress of ongoing development works in the area. According to government officials, the projects have been planned to address long-standing civic issues and enhance the quality of urban infrastructure.

Kolathur, which is represented by Stalin in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, has witnessed several development initiatives in recent years as part of the state government's efforts to upgrade public infrastructure in urban areas.

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Finance Department, Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

NOTICE

1. Aggregate Amount: Total Rs.10,000 crore 1. Rs.2,000 crore 14-Year Tenure. **2.** Rs.2,000 crore 10-Year 6-Month Tenure. **3.** Rs.2,000 crore - Re-issue of 7.38% SGS 2034. **4.** Rs.2,000 crore - Re-issue of 7.31% SGS 2033. **5.** Rs.2,000 crore - Re-issue of 7.48% SGS 2037.

2. Method of Issue : By auction, through RBI (PDO), Mumbai

3. Date of auction : March 10, 2026

Government of Karnataka invites subscription to the above securities. Copies of the Notification and Application forms may be obtained from PDO, RBI, Bangalore. Non-competitive bidding facility has been introduced by RBI to encourage participation of retail investors. The Government stock up to 10% of the notified amount of the sale will be allotted to eligible individuals and institutions. Sample Tender Forms and the revised scheme of Non-competitive bidding facility is available on the website **www.rbi.org.in.**

Sd/- (Ikram Shariff)
Joint Secretary to Government
(Budget & Resources), Finance Department

DIPR/CP/5986/Zen/2025-26

CIVIL COURT S.D. BELAPUR
IN THE COURT OF **Shri. P.P. Deshmane**
Jt. Civil Judge Senior Devision and
Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Belapur, Thane
COURT NOTICE
U/o. 05 Rule 20 CPC
Sum.C.S./544/2023
M/s. Dang Enterprises Vs. M/s. K.G.N. Commercial

To, Next Date : 25.03.2026
M/s. K.G.N. Commercial,
Its Proprietor Mr. Riyaj Rafic Patel, No. 43/1,
Ground Floor, 1st Main Road, 4th D Cross, Shampura,
Kadugondanahalli, Bengaluri Urban, Karnataka – 560011.

Whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the Defendant above named cannot be served in the ordinary way of service. Hence, this proclamation under **Order 5 Rule 20 of CPC** is hereby issued against him and should appear personally or through his counsel on **25.03.2026 at 11 a.m.**

Take notice that in default of his appearance on the day before mentioned, the above said case will be heard and determined in his absence according to law.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court, this 25.02.2026

Sd/-
Jr. Clerk
Civil Court S.d. Belapur

SEAL

Jt. Civil Judge Senior Devision
and Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate,
Belapur, Navi Mumbai (Thane), Maharshtra

UT AT A PIVOTAL JUNCTURE

J&K no longer settles for mediocrity, dares to dream big: LG

JAMMU

Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said on Sunday that Jammu and Kashmir is no longer settling for mediocrity and is now daring to dream big. L-G Sinha inaugurated the headquarters of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) at Sidhra in Jammu city.

He said at the inaugural function, Jammu and Kashmir no longer settles for mediocrity or the ordinary, and it dares to dream big. He said over the past few years, the region has witnessed transformative changes, thereby rendering the system transparent.

After inaugurating the Headquarters of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), L-G Sinha wrote on X, These two buildings are not merely structures of steel, glass, and concrete; they stand as a bold declaration of transparency in public life and a corruption-free Union Territory. Today, J&K stands at a pivotal juncture. Over the past 5-6 years, we have ushered in transformative changes, rendering the system transparent and dedicating it to public service. The entire machinery now operates not for the benefit of a select few but for every individual across UT. J&K no longer settles for mediocrity or the ordinary. It now dares to dream big.

The L-G said that among our people, a firm belief has taken root that a golden future lies ahead. Fulfilling this vision is also the responsibility of the officers and staff at the Anti-Corruption Bureau. I called upon ACB to ensure that each decision, investigation and prosecution stands firm under scrutiny of the courts and must harness the authority granted by the nation's Constitution to expose injustice, eradicate corruption, and earn the trust of the people, he said.

The ACB is the premier anti-graft organisation in the union territory, and its main objective is to eradicate corruption.

The offences of corruption and bribery against government employees were initially covered only under the provisions of the Ranbir Penal Code,1932. Till 1949, the cases in this regard were registered and investigated by the local police.

In 1962, a separate organisation, 'Anti-Corruption Organisation', was created to investigate all cases relating to bribery and corruption.

QUICK READ

'Nari Shakti' achievements strengthen Viksit Bharat resolve: Modi

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday extended greetings for International Women's Day to all Nari Shaktis, hailing their achievements, stating that they shape India's progress with determination, creativity, and unmatched zeal, thereby strengthening the resolve for a Viksit Bharat. On International Women's Day, I extend my greetings to all our Nari Shakti. Across every field, women are shaping India's progress with determination, creativity and unmatched zeal. Their achievements inspire our nation and strengthen our collective resolve to build a Viksit Bharat, PM Modi said in a post on X.

Several trains cancelled in Howrah, Asansol divisions

Kolkata

Several local trains were cancelled on Sunday morning, causing inconvenience to candidates about to appear in the Group-D recruitment examination. About 8,09,000 applications have been made for the Group-D written exam. According to railway officials, several trains have been cancelled and some train schedules have been changed to ensure safe and timely travel of passengers, due to maintenance and distressing block activities in various railway divisions of Howrah and Asansol divisions. A spokesperson for Eastern Railway said, In order to avoid inconvenience to passengers, the schedules of all cancelled and rescheduled trains have been informed in advance.

Essential for everyone to respect the post of President: Mayawati

New Delhi

Amid the controversy over the security lapse during President Droupadi Murmu's visit to West Bengal, Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Sunday described the incident as extremely unfortunate, stressing the importance of respecting the post of the President. Mayawati took to social media, X, and said, According to the ideals and dignity of the Indian Constitution, it is necessary for everyone to respect the post of the Honourable President and also to observe its protocol, and it is not right to politicise this post in any way. The current President of the country is not only a woman but also a member of the tribal community.

Mamata accuses BJP of attacking democratic institutions

The Bengal CM alleged that the BJP was attempting to replace the Constitution of India with its own party manifesto by systematically misusing democratic institutions.

Kolkata

In a sharp social media post issued on Sunday morning, Banerjee claimed that the BJP-led Union government is undermining democratic principles by allegedly weaponising constitutional institutions for political gain. The Chief Minister said the developments unfolding in the country represent a serious threat to the democratic framework established by the Constitution.

What we are witnessing today is unprecedented, deeply unfortunate, and a direct assault on the democratic foundations of this republic, Banerjee stated in her post. She further alleged that the ruling party at the Centre is pursuing a political agenda driven by what she described as a One Nation, One Leader, One Party approach.

According to the Chief Minister, this approach has resulted in the systematic use of constitutional posts and institutions to serve what she called anti-people ambitions. She claimed that various central agencies and institutions have been deployed against the state government led by the **All India Trinamool Congress. Banerjee alleged that central investigative agencies, national commissions, sections of the media, and even parts of the judiciary have been used to target West Bengal and its administration. She described the media involved as servile and accused them of amplifying narratives against her government.

The Chief Minister's remarks come a day after controversy erupted over the programme of President Droupadi Murmu at an International Santal Conclave held in Gossaipur in Darjeeling district, where the President was scheduled to attend as the Chief Guest and deliver the keynote address. The issue drew criticism from various quarters directed at Banerjee, her party, and the state government. Banerjee also targeted the Election Commission of India (ECI), alleging that it is being misused by the Centre. She referred to the poll body as the Vanish Commission, claiming that legitimate voters in West Bengal are being removed from the electoral rolls. Her comments have added to the ongoing political confrontation between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP, further intensifying the debate over the functioning of democratic institutions and electoral processes in the country.

PM visits GPRA site, hands over new homes

NEW DELHI

The redevelopment initiative is part of the Centre's broader plan to upgrade ageing government residential colonies and create modern infrastructure for employees and administrative offices.

The GPRA redevelopment programme covers several prominent locations in Delhi, including Sarojini Nagar, Netaji Nagar, Kasturba Nagar, and Sriniwaspuri.

The projects, with a combined investment of around ₹15,200 crore, are being implemented through an innovative self-sustainable financial model designed to redevelop these colonies without placing a burden on the public exchequer. Under this model, a limited portion of the land within the redevelopment area is earmarked for commercial and residential development. The revenue generated from these spaces is then used to finance the construction of modern government housing, improved infrastructure, and public facilities within the colonies.

Once completed, the redevelopment plan will provide more than 9,350 modern flats for government employees. In addition, approximately 48 lakh square feet of office space will be created as part of the project, which is expected to enhance administrative efficiency and generate additional monetisation opportunities for the government.

During his visit, Prime Minister Modi interacted with the allottees and highlighted the government's commitment to improving living standards and infrastructure for public servants working in the national capital. Later in the day, the Prime Minister is scheduled to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for multiple Delhi Metro projects worth about ₹18,300 crore. As part of the expansion, he will inaugurate two new metro corridors: the 12.3-km Majlis Park–Maujpur Babarpur corridor on the Pink Line and the 9.9-km Deepali Chowk–Majlis Park corridor on the Magenta Line. These new corridors are expected to significantly improve connectivity in several parts of Delhi, including Burari, Jagatpur-Wazirabad, Khajuri Khas, Bhajanpura, Yamuna Vihar, Madhuban Chowk, Haiderpur Badli Mor, Bhalaswa, and Majlis Park. The Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for three additional metro corridors under Phase V-A of the Delhi Metro project.

Leaders across the Telugu states, including S Abdul Nazeer and N Chandrababu Naidu, extended greetings to women on the occasion of International Day of Women.

AP leaders extend greetings on International Women's Day

HYDERABAD

Andhra Pradesh Governor S. Abdul Nazeer conveyed his warm wishes to the women of the state, acknowledging their contributions to the country's progress and social harmony. In his message marking International Women's Day, the Governor emphasised the historic and ongoing role of women in shaping India's social and political landscape.

He noted that women in the country have always played a significant role in the freedom movement and have contributed immensely to maintaining national integrity, peace, and harmony. Nazeer said that International Women's Day is an important occasion to recognise women's achievements in society, politics, and the global economy, while also raising awareness about their rights to equality, justice, and dignity. In our society, women play an undisputed leadership role in preserving family traditions and contributing to nation-building, the Governor stated, adding that the occasion serves as a reminder of the importance of empowering women across all sectors.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu also extended his best wishes to women and mothers across Telugu households. Highlighting the state government's commitment to women's empowerment, Naidu said that several

initiatives have been implemented to improve women's welfare,

economic independence, and social security.

He pointed out that the women's empowerment movement in the state began with granting equal property rights to girls and has evolved into a broader mission of transforming women into entrepreneurs and leaders in various sectors. According to the Chief Minister, the coalition government is implementing several welfare schemes aimed at supporting women, including the Talliki Vandanam scheme, free bus travel under the Stree Shakti initiative, the Deepam-2 free gas cylinder programme, and the NTR Bharosa widow pension scheme.

All-women bike rally marks Women's Day in Delhi

NEW DELHI

The event witnessed the presence of several prominent leaders, including Rekha Gupta, Chief Minister of Delhi, and Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha. They joined the gathering along with other political leaders and public representatives to encourage the participants and celebrate the achievements of women in various sectors. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta welcomed Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and expressed gratitude for his presence at the event. She said his participation served as a source of encouragement for women riders taking part in the rally. Respected Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has come here today to encourage all of us and to extend his good wishes to all the sisters of Delhi, she said while addressing the participants. Highlighting the significance of the rally, Gupta noted that such initiatives symbolise the progress of women in India and reflect the country's commitment to gender equality. According to her, the rally served not just as a celebration but also as a demonstration of women's increasing confidence and participation in public life. She said the bike rally was organised as a tribute to women's empowerment and reflected how India is progressing in multiple sectors while ensuring women remain an integral part of that growth. Extending her greetings on International Women's Day, the Chief Minister conveyed her best wishes to women across the country. Several political leaders from different parties also joined the rally and interacted with participants, encouraging them to continue pursuing their ambitions and contributing to society. Priyanka Chaturvedi expressed happiness at seeing women confidently riding bikes and symbolically taking control of their lives. She said it was inspiring to witness women steering their own paths and contributing to the nation's development. Meanwhile, Bansuri Swaraj extended her greetings to women across the country and emphasised the importance of women-led development.

J&K COPS FILE CHARGE SHEET AGAINST 7 FOR FUND MISUSE

SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Police's Crime Branch said on Sunday that it has filed a charge sheet against seven accused in court under various sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

A statement by the Crime Branch Kashmir said, The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K has filed a charge sheet in FIR No. 43/2018 before the Hon'ble Court of Special Anti-Corruption Judge Baramulla against seven accused individuals for offences under Sections 420, 120-B RPC read with Section 5(2) of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act. The case was registered on the basis of a written complaint alleging misappropriation of government funds sanctioned for the construction of a school building at the village of Hampora Kralgund under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Scheme. The project was sanctioned for the construction of a school building along with a kitchen, toilet and ramp. During the investigation, it surfaced that although an amount of Rs 5,73,592 had been released through various cheques by the then ZEO Langate, mostly routed through the 1st Teacher of Primary School Hampora, the approved works were not executed as per norms. On the ground, only the school building structure existed, while the kitchen block, toilet and ramp were not constructed despite the release of funds. The investigation further revealed that the accused officials, in connivance with the contractor, entered into a well-planned criminal conspiracy and allotted the contract in violation of SSA guidelines, although the construction work was required to be executed through Village Education Committee (VEC) members, the statement mentioned. The site plan of the project was also altered for their benefit by deviating from the approved plan of a three-roomed school building with a separate kitchen, toilet and ramp, and instead a double-storey structure with four rooms was constructed. Further, even after completion of the structure, the contractor failed to hand over the building to the Education Department, while the concerned officials deliberately did not take possession, enabling another accused to occupy the building illegally, the statement said.

NRLM scheme brings economic independence to rural women

RAJOURI

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) is playing a vital role in empowering rural women and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities in the border district of Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir. The scheme is helping poor and below poverty line families, especially women, to become financially independent through the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and small-scale livelihood units across different blocks of the district. Under the initiative, the NRLM department has established several women SHGs where members are engaged in different income generating activities.

HOLI MURDER CRACKDOWN

MCD bulldozes accused's property in Delhi

NEW DELHI

Authorities have initiated bulldozer action against the property of the main accused in the Uttam Nagar murder case in Delhi, where a 26-year-old man was killed following a dispute during Holi celebrations.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) carried out the demolition drive against the house of the accused, identified as Nizamuddin, as the investigation into the violent clash continues.

The incident occurred on the day of Holi in the Uttam Nagar area of Delhi, when a minor altercation escalated into a violent confrontation, ultimately leading to the death of 26-year-old Tarun Kumar. According to police officials, a dispute began after a water balloon thrown by a child accidentally burst near a neighbour, triggering tensions between the two families.

The tragic incident took place on the night of March 4 in the JJ Colony area of Uttam Nagar. Police said the confrontation started when an 11-year-old girl playing Holi from the terrace threw a balloon filled with coloured water. The balloon burst accidentally and splashed on a woman standing nearby. Although the girl's family immediately apologised, the matter escalated after an argument broke out. According to investigators, the woman later called her relatives to the spot, following which members of both families belonging to different communities engaged in a violent clash. During the scuffle, eight people were injured, including three from one side and five from the other. Most of the injured were treated and discharged from the hospital on the same day. Tarun Kumar, who was pursuing courses in digital marketing and interior designing, had returned home after celebrating Holi with his friends and was not initially involved in the dispute.

Pawan Kalyan expresses concern over Murmu's 'painful' remarks

AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan said on Sunday that he was deeply concerned by the painful and sad remarks of President Droupadi Murmu regarding the conduct of the International Santal Conference in Darjeeling, West Bengal.

When an event celebrating the rich heritage of the Santhal community is organised, it should ensure the dignity, participation, and respect that such a culture deserves. It is regrettable that circumstances arose where members of the Santhal community themselves found it difficult to attend the conference meant for them. Such cultural gatherings must reflect inclusivity, sensitivity, and proper administrative planning, the Deputy Chief Minister posted on 'X'. The Jana Sena leader stated that the office of the President of India holds the highest constitutional respect in our nation and must always be treated with the dignity it deserves. Ensuring that the Hon'ble President's visit is conducted with utmost regard is the responsibility of the concerned administration. India's tribal communities are an integral part of our nation's identity and pride.

QUICK READ

Fuel and food supplies to Balochistan face disruption

Kabul

Fuel and food supplies to several parts of Pakistan's Balochistan have been disrupted due to the conflict between Iran, Israel and the US, raising prices and sparking fears of shortages in border areas, local media reported. Pakistan's regions along the border with Iran, especially Makran and Rakshana areas, including Gwadar, Kech, Panjgur, Chagai and Washuk, rely heavily on Iranian goods, which are cheaper and easily available than supplies from other parts of Pakistan. Local traders said that the closure of the border and restrictions on exports from Iran have minimised the flow of essential goods into the region.

Fragmented apps, devices hinder agentic AI development in China

Beijing

Agentic artificial intelligence can only succeed if it can operate seamlessly across applications and connected devices, but China's fragmented mobile ecosystem and super app fragmentation prevent such interoperability, a report has said explaining the Doubao phone controversy. The report from Lawfare media said China's do everything apps such as WeChat and Alipay create closed ecosystems that block agents from accessing calendars, emails, chat logs and payment credentials. Further, if these broad permissions are granted across devices, they come at a cost to data privacy and security, the report pointed out calling it the crux of the controversy over OpenClaw in the western world and the Doubao phone in China.

Fire erupts in Afghanistan's Torkham after Pakistani strike

Kabul

A fire erupted at a commercial market in the Torkham area of Afghanistan following a massive strike by Pakistani forces, damaging businesses and property, local media reported Sunday citing officials. Torkham Mayor Mawlawi Abdullah Mustafa said several shells were fired toward the town around 4 a.m. local time, striking near a commercial market. The shelling sparked a blaze that quickly spread through several shops, forcing firefighters and residents to work together to control the flames. Officials said four fire trucks and municipal water tankers were deployed, but the fire had not yet been fully contained.

ISRAEL STRIKES FUEL DEPOTS NEAR TEHRAN AS CONFLICT ENTER DAY 9

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran intensified overnight as Israeli forces expanded their bombardment campaign, targeting fuel depots near Tehran and other strategic infrastructure.

Continued from page 1

TEHRAN

According to reports, Israeli strikes on fuel storage facilities near Tehran caused massive explosions, sending thick plumes of black smoke across the city early Sunday morning.

Dramatic footage circulating from the Iranian capital showed the night sky illuminated by bright orange flames as the blasts engulfed large oil storage sites.

Israeli officials indicated that the targeted fuel reserves were allegedly being used to support Iran's weapons manufacturing and to power military bases. The strikes form part of a broader campaign aimed at weakening Iran's military infrastructure as hostilities continue to escalate between the two countries.

Iran's oil distribution company confirmed that the attacks resulted in the deaths of four employees working at the affected facilities. Authorities said temporary fuel rationing would be introduced in certain regions to manage supplies and ensure fair distribution amid the disruption caused by the strikes.

The conflict has also begun to affect neighbouring countries, raising concerns of a wider regional crisis. Bahrain reported that one of its desalination plants was damaged in what it described as an Iranian attack, highlighting how vital infrastructure across the Gulf region is increasingly becoming a target amid the intensifying hostilities.

Meanwhile, Iran is facing political uncertainty following the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Reports suggest that Tehran is moving closer to appointing a new leader, with strong indications that Khamenei's influential son could be chosen as his successor.

Israel has warned that it may target any successor who assumes leadership of Iran, signalling that the conflict could further intensify. U.S. President Donald Trump also issued a stark statement, suggesting that the war might only end once Iran's military forces and ruling leadership are completely dismantled.

With military strikes expanding, regional infrastructure under threat, and leadership changes unfolding in Tehran, the conflict shows little sign of easing, raising fears of a prolonged and potentially wider war in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia warns Iran of retaliation

Saudi Arabia has warned Iran that continued attacks on the kingdom and its energy infrastructure could force Riyadh to respond militarily, even as it continues to support diplomatic efforts.

RIYAD

According to four sources familiar with the matter, Saudi officials delivered a clear message to Tehran that while the kingdom prefers a diplomatic settlement, persistent attacks on Saudi territory or its energy sector could trigger a direct response.

The warning highlights Riyadh's growing concern over the regional fallout from the intensifying confrontation involving Iran, the United States, and Israel.

The message was reportedly conveyed before Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian delivered a speech in which he apologised to neighbouring Gulf states for Iran's recent actions. His statement appeared to be an attempt to ease tensions with regional countries after Iranian strikes reportedly hit civilian targets in the Gulf, sparking anger and concern among neighbouring governments.

Sources said Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan communicated Riyadh's stance during a phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi two days earlier. During the call, Prince Faisal reportedly stressed that Saudi Arabia remains open to mediation efforts aimed at de-escalating the conflict and reaching a negotiated settlement.

The Saudi minister also emphasized that neither Saudi Arabia nor other Gulf states had allowed the United States to use their airspace or territory to launch airstrikes against Iran. This position reflects the kingdom's attempt to maintain a careful balance between supporting regional stability and avoiding direct involvement in the conflict.

However, the sources indicated that Riyadh also delivered a firm warning. If Iranian attacks continue to target Saudi territory or its vital energy facilities, the kingdom could allow U.S. forces to use military bases in Saudi Arabia for operations against Iran. Such a move would mark a significant escalation in the regional conflict.

Saudi Arabia also signaled that it would retaliate if Iranian strikes continued to threaten critical energy infrastructure, underscoring the kingdom's determination to defend its strategic assets.

With tensions already high across the Middle East, Saudi Arabia's warning illustrates the fragile balance facing Gulf nations as they attempt to avoid a wider war while protecting their security and economic interests.

Israeli strike in Central Beirut kills 4, raises fears of wider conflict

BEIRUT

The attack represents the first Israeli strike in the heart of Beirut since hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah resumed last week. The strike has intensified fears that the ongoing conflict could spread further across Lebanon and the broader Middle East.

According to reports, the airstrike hit an apartment within the Ramada hotel building located in central Beirut. The impact caused major damage to the structure and resulted in the deaths of at least four people. Emergency teams were dispatched to the site to search for survivors and clear debris following the explosion.

Israel's military said the strike was aimed at senior commanders belonging to Iran's elite Quds Force, a division of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). However, officials did not disclose the identities of the individuals targeted in the operation.

In a statement, the Israeli military said the commanders were part of the Quds Force's Lebanon Corps and were allegedly involved in planning attacks against Israel. The commanders of the Quds Force's Lebanon Corps operated to advance terror attacks against the state of Israel and its civilians, while operating simultaneously for the IRGC in Iran, the statement said.

The strike comes amid rapidly escalating tensions in the region following the widening conflict between Iran, Israel, and the United States. Lebanon was drawn deeper into the confrontation earlier this week after the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah launched rockets and drones into Israeli territory.

Israel responded by carrying out extensive airstrikes across southern and eastern Lebanon, as well as areas near Beirut. The latest strike in central Beirut signals a potential expansion of Israel's military operations beyond Hezbollah's traditional strongholds in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

The escalation has raised concerns among regional and international observers that the conflict could intensify further, increasing the risk of broader instability across the Middle East as multiple actors become involved in the fighting.

2 Kuwaiti officers on duty killed

KUWAIT

In a brief statement posted on the social media platform X, the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry confirmed the deaths of the two officers but did not disclose details about the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Officials said the officers were killed while carrying out their official responsibilities, but no further information about the location or nature of the event was immediately provided.

The incident comes at a time when Kuwait and other Gulf nations have been facing heightened security threats due to the widening regional conflict. In recent days, Kuwait has been actively intercepting drones and missiles believed to have been launched from Iran as part of retaliatory actions following U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iranian territory.

Several Gulf states have strengthened their air defence systems and emergency response mechanisms as missile and drone attacks have increasingly targeted military facilities and strategic infrastructure in the region. The expanding conflict has raised fears that more countries could be drawn into the confrontation.

Reports indicate that Iranian drone and missile attacks have been directed at U.S. military installations and other strategic sites in the Gulf, prompting defensive responses from regional allies hosting American forces. Kuwait, which hosts several U.S. military facilities, has played a key role in intercepting incoming threats and protecting critical infrastructure.

Authorities have not yet confirmed whether the officers' deaths were directly linked to missile or drone interceptions. However, the timing of the incident underscores the heightened security environment facing Gulf nations as they deal with the spillover effects of the ongoing war.

The deaths mark another sign of how the conflict is increasingly affecting countries beyond the immediate battlefield, with Gulf states now facing growing risks to both security personnel and civilian infrastructure.

Trump lauds Italy's Meloni for supporting war on Iran

WASHINGTON

Trump commended Meloni for her leadership and her readiness to support Western efforts during the intensifying conflict with Iran. According to the report, Trump said Italy was doing what it could to assist the United States and Israel as the war continued to expand across the region.

Trump reportedly described Meloni as both a great leader and a personal friend, emphasizing that she had consistently shown willingness to help during the crisis. His comments reflect the strengthening ties between Washington and Rome as Western allies coordinate responses to the escalating military confrontation with Iran.

Italy has already indicated that it is prepared to contribute to regional security measures. Prime Minister Meloni earlier announced that Italy plans to provide air-defence assistance to Gulf countries facing the threat of Iranian missile and drone strikes. The move is aimed at protecting Italian personnel, energy interests, and broader European security in the Middle East.

In addition, Italy is expected to deploy naval assets to Cyprus as part of a European mission designed to strengthen defenses in the eastern Mediterranean and support stability in the region. The deployment comes amid concerns that the conflict between Iran, Israel, and the United States could widen and affect neighboring countries.

The ongoing war has already triggered widespread instability across the Middle East, with strikes and counter-strikes reported in multiple countries and fears growing of a broader regional escalation. Western allies, including several European nations, have been increasing their military readiness and defensive support to partners in the Gulf.

Trump's praise for Meloni underscores Italy's emerging role among Western partners responding to the crisis, as international efforts intensify to counter Iranian attacks and protect key strategic infrastructure across the region.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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1		4		5	9		6	8
	3		8			4		
	1			8	5		7	6
6		5	1			2		
	7			4	6		1	
3		2	6			8		5
	6			3	2		4	
7		1	4			6		2

8	9	4	5	7	2	3	1	6
5	6	1	9	3	8	4	2	7
3	2	7	4	1	6	5	8	9
4	7	5	6	2	3	8	9	1
1	8	9	7	5	4	6	3	2
2	3	6	8	9	1	7	5	4
6	5	2	3	4	9	1	7	8
9	4	3	1	8	7	2	6	5
7	1	8	2	6	5	9	4	3

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

US-Israel violated international law with Iran strikes: SWISS

BURE

Speaking to the Swiss newspaper SonntagsZeitung, Pfister said the Swiss government believes the attacks on Iran constitute a breach of international legal norms.

Referring to the Swiss Federal Council, the country's cabinet, he said the government considers the military action a violation of the international rule prohibiting the use of force between states.

The Federal Council is of the opinion that the attack on Iran constitutes a violation of international law, Pfister said in the interview. He added that the strikes breached the fundamental principle known as the prohibition of violence, which bars countries from attacking one another without legitimate justification.

Under the United Nations Charter, member states are required to refrain from the use or threat of force against other nations unless such action is authorized by the United Nations Security Council or carried out in self-defence. Several legal experts have argued that many countries could view the U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran as unjustified under these provisions.

Pfister said the criticism was not directed at a single country but applied to all states involved in actions that violate the prohibition on force. According to him, both the attacking parties and those responding militarily risk breaching international law if their actions do not meet the strict conditions set by the United Nations Charter.

The Americans and Israel have attacked Iran from the air. In doing so, they, like Iran, violated international law, Pfister stated, indicating that the broader conflict has led multiple actors to cross legal boundaries.

The Swiss defence minister also called for an immediate halt to the violence, warning that the escalating conflict poses serious risks to civilians and regional stability. Switzerland, which traditionally maintains a neutral stance in global conflicts, has repeatedly urged diplomatic solutions and respect for international law.

His remarks come amid growing international debate over the legality of the military operations and rising fears that the conflict could further destabilize the Middle East if fighting continues to intensify.

QUICK READ

India's energy policy is written in New Delhi, not Washington

New Delhi

India's energy policy is determined in New Delhi and not in Washington, a data has showed. The analysis by The Matrix, which analysed data on India's crude oil imports between November 2024 and February 2026 claimed that despite a prolonged pressure campaign from the United States during the presidency of Donald Trump, India continued to increase its imports of crude oil from Russia, prioritising its own energy security and economic interests. According to the data cited in the social media post on X, the pressure on India began even before Trump assumed office.

Pakistan in 'dangerous' remittance and aid dependency trap

Islamabad

Pakistan has locked itself into a dangerous economic trap by prioritising short term expatriate remittances and foreign aid over productive development, a report has said. The report from Asian Lite said prioritising remittances and aid over development creates profound structural problems that sets Pakistan to stagnation. Further, it highlighted a dangerous trend of remittance money used to finance consumption of luxury imports rather than investment. The country recorded remittances at $3.46 billion in January 2026, up 15.4 per cent year on year and around $96 billion sent by overseas Pakistanis over the past three fiscal years that have propped up the balance of payments and stabilised the rupee.

China using Iran crisis to test sanctions-evasion strategy for Taiwan stir

Beijing

The growing uncertainty over Iran's leadership after the death of its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is drawing global attention, with analysts debating who will replace him, a report has said. However, many experts believe the more important question is what the crisis means for China's long-term strategy, particularly as Beijing prepares for potential geopolitical tensions involving Taiwan, according to Taipei Times report. China has deep economic ties with Iran and is the largest buyer of Iranian crude oil. Beijing purchased nearly 90 per cent of Iran's exported crude last year, amounting to about 1.61 million barrels per day. The two countries are also linked through a 25-year cooperation agreement worth about $400 billion, which covers areas such as energy, infrastructure and trade.

Women's financial access driving economic transformation: FM

As India celebrates the increasing role of women in shaping the nation's economic landscape, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said that improved financial access is enabling women to achieve true independence.

NEW DELHI

Marking International Women's Day, Sitharaman highlighted how government initiatives aimed at financial inclusion are empowering women across India.

In a post on the social media platform X, she noted that programmes such as the Jan Dhan financial inclusion scheme and the emergence of Lakhpati Didis are transforming the financial landscape for women, particularly in rural areas.

The Finance Minister pointed out that access to financial services plays a crucial role in strengthening women's independence. According to her, women now hold more than 28 crore bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, bringing formal banking services into millions of households and significantly enhancing women's financial participation.

When women gain financial access, they gain independence, Sitharaman stated, emphasising that financial inclusion initiatives have opened doors for women to manage savings, access credit and contribute to household financial decisions.

She further underlined that women are no longer just participants in the economy but are increasingly emerging as wealth creators. Sitharaman highlighted that more than three crore women have become Lakhpati Didis, a term used for rural women who have achieved an annual income of over ₹1 lakh through self-help groups, small businesses and entrepreneurship initiatives.

According to her, these women are playing a critical role in transforming rural livelihoods while strengthening local economies. By building sustainable incomes, they are uplifting families, supporting community development and contributing to the country's broader economic progress.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal also praised the role of women in nation-building. In his message on X, he said that Nari Shakti remains central to building a new and stronger India.

Goyal noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has focused on creating greater opportunities for women across multiple sectors, including entrepreneurship, sports, defence, science and rural development.

He added that women are driving India's transformation with determination and confidence, and called for renewed commitment to supporting their aspirations. As the country celebrates International Women's Day, leaders emphasised the need to further strengthen women's role in shaping a more prosperous and inclusive India.

Marking International Women's Day, Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, said that the women in his family have played a decisive role in shaping his outlook on life, responsibility and nation-building.

Women in family shaped my values, vision: Adani

AHMEDABAD

In a personal reflection shared on LinkedIn on Sunday, Adani described the women around him as the architects of my conscience.

He said their influence has been central to shaping his character, guiding his values and shaping his approach towards leadership and responsibility.

Reflecting on his childhood, Adani recalled that his earliest lessons came from his mother, who introduced him to India's great epics and the values embedded in them. According to him, the stories from these epics imparted life lessons far deeper than any textbook could.

He noted that these stories helped instil important values such as courage, sacrifice, duty and faith at a young age. Adani said the moral lessons drawn from these narratives played an important role in shaping his mindset and approach towards challenges later in life.

The billionaire industrialist also reflected on a turning point in his life when he left home at the age of 16 to move to Mumbai with little more than determination to build something of his own. Looking back at that moment, he said he often thinks about the courage it must have taken for his mother to allow him to step into an uncertain future at such a young age.

Adani also paid tribute to his wife, Priti Adani, describing her as the keeper of my conscience. A trained dentist by profession, she chose to dedicate her time to building the Adani Foundation, which runs several initiatives focused on social development.

According to Adani, the foundation works across key sectors including education, healthcare, sustainable livelihoods and community development. These programmes currently reach more than 10 million people across 22 states in India.

Speaking about the younger members of his family, Adani said his daughters-in-law Paridhi Adani and Diva Adani have brought fresh perspectives into the family.

He described Paridhi as a thoughtful and sharp lawyer capable of engaging on a wide range of issues, while Diva, a designer, blends creativity with compassion, particularly through her support for people with disabilities.

Adani concluded by emphasising that the strength, wisdom and values of the women in his life continue to guide his journey and inspire his vision for contributing to India's growth and development.

Centre eases customs norms for returned export cargo amid Hormuz disruptions

NEW DELHI

The Central government has relaxed customs procedures for export consignments returning to India after ships were forced to turn back due to disruptions in major maritime routes.

The move comes after several vessels carrying Indian export cargo were unable to reach their destination ports because of the ongoing disruptions in the region. As a result, some ships have returned to Indian ports with consignments that had already been cleared for export, creating logistical and procedural challenges for exporters and shipping companies.

In a circular issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), the government announced a simplified process for handling such consignments when they arrive back at Indian ports.

The temporary relief has been introduced to address concerns raised by exporters and shipping firms whose cargo could not be delivered overseas due to the maritime disruptions. The measure will also facilitate back to town requests, a process that allows exporters to retrieve goods that were originally shipped out but had to return to the country.

According to the circular, the relaxation will remain in effect for 15 days from the date of issuance, providing immediate procedural relief to affected exporters.

Under the revised arrangement, containers returning to India can be unloaded directly at port terminals without the need to file standard import documentation such as a Bill of Entry. This is expected to significantly reduce paperwork and speed up the handling of returned consignments.

However, customs authorities will still conduct necessary verification checks before allowing containers to be unloaded. Officials will examine shipping documents and match container details with the corresponding shipping bills to ensure accuracy.

Additionally, customs officers will verify whether the container seals remain intact. If any seal is found to be broken or tampered with, the container will undergo a comprehensive inspection to ensure compliance with customs regulations.

In another important step, the CBIC has permitted exporters to cancel shipping bills for consignments that have returned to India, even if the Export General Manifest (EGM) has already been filed. This provision is expected to ease administrative hurdles faced by exporters in such situations.

To further streamline the process, a new option will soon be introduced on the Indian Customs Electronic System (ICES) platform, enabling exporters to cancel shipping bills even after EGM filing. Officials said the update will help simplify procedures and provide quicker resolution for exporters affected by the ongoing maritime disruptions.

Fuel prices rise in South Korea amid speculation of price cap system

SEOUL

Gasoline and diesel prices rose moderately on Sunday as the government considers adopting a price cap system amid concerns over rising energy prices following the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

According to data from the Korea National Oil Corp., the nationwide average price of gasoline came to 1,893.3 won (US$1.27) per liter, up 3.9 won from the previous day, while diesel rose 4.8 won to 1,915.4 won per litre.

In Seoul, fuel prices also increased, though gains were limited. The average gasoline price in the capital reached 1,944.7 won per litre, up 3 won from the previous day, while diesel rose 4.9 won to 1,968.2 won.

Compared with the recent daily jumps of tens of won, the rise is significantly slower, suggesting that the government move may be helping temper the upward trend.

Sources said the government began reviewing the possibility of adopting the system after surging global crude prices were reflected almost immediately in domestic fuel prices, following U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliatory attacks in the region.

South Korea, which depends heavily on energy imports, is particularly vulnerable to external price shocks, which often drive inflation.

Meanwhile, the government here is considering adopting a price cap system for oil for the first time in nearly 30 years, sources said Sunday, amid concerns over rising energy prices following the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

Officials began reviewing the possibility after surging global crude prices were reflected almost immediately in domestic fuel prices, rather than after the typical two-week lag, following U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliatory attacks in the region.

Cipla recalls over 400 cartons of cancer drug in US: FDA

NEW DELHI

In its latest enforcement report, the US health regulator said that Cipla USA, headquartered in Warren, New Jersey, has initiated a recall of certain batches of Nilotinib Capsules available in two strengths — 150 mg and 200 mg.

The recall involves 271 cartons from one batch and 164 cartons from another batch of the medication. According to the USFDA, the affected lots were recalled after failing to meet the required capsule specifications during the manufacturing process.

Cipla USA voluntarily initiated the recall on February 18, 2026. The USFDA has classified the action as a Class III recall, which indicates that the use of the product is unlikely to cause serious health issues or significant adverse health consequences.

Nilotinib is a widely used medication in cancer treatment. The drug works by blocking the activity of abnormal proteins that promote the growth and multiplication of cancer cells. By inhibiting these proteins, the medicine helps slow down or stop the spread of cancer in the body.

India continues to be a major supplier of pharmaceutical products to the United States, with Indian drug manufacturers playing a crucial role in the American healthcare system. The country also hosts the largest number of USFDA-compliant pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities outside the United States.

Indian pharmaceutical companies supply a significant portion of medicines used by patients in the US. Industry data shows that in 2022, Indian drugmakers accounted for nearly four out of every ten prescriptions filled in the United States, underscoring their strong presence in the global generics market.

Meanwhile, similar recalls involving Indian pharmaceutical companies were reported earlier this year. In January, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries and Cipla recalled certain products from the US market due to manufacturing-related concerns.

The USFDA had earlier stated that the US-based arm of Sun Pharma recalled more than 26,000 bottles of a generic medicine used to treat dandruff and inflammatory skin conditions, highlighting ongoing regulatory scrutiny of manufacturing standards in the pharmaceutical industry.

BharatNet connected 2.15 lakh GPs across India: Govt

NEW DELHI

India's massive push to expand optical fibre, 5G and digital public infrastructure has connected more than 2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats through BharatNet, the government said on Sunday.

Optical fibre deployment nationwide rose from 19.35 lakh route kilometres in 2019 to 42.36 lakh route kilometres in 2025, and 5G connectivity now covers 99.9 per cent of districts with over 5.18 lakh base transceiver stations as of December 2025, an official statement said.

Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM WANI) has deployed 4,09,111 Wi Fi hotspots supported by 207 PDO Aggregators and 113 App Providers as of February 2026, to provide affordable, high-speed public internet connectivity, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Integrating last-mile access, literacy programmes, and affordable internet with platforms connecting markets and social schemes strengthens rural livelihoods, ensures timely benefit delivery, and fosters inclusive participation in India's digital economy, it said.

Cloud and data centre capacity is also expanding rapidly to support digital governance and AI-ready infrastructure. With a total data centre capacity at about 1,280 megawatts, it is projected to grow four to five times by 2030, the government forecasted.

Through MeghRaj (GI Cloud), over 2,170 ministries and departments are hosting applications on secure, scalable government cloud platforms.

The government highlighted that data costs have plummeted from Rs 269 per GB in 2014 to roughly Rs 8–10 per GB in 2025–2026, making India one of the world's cheapest data markets. Broadband subscriptions crossed the 100 crore mark in November 2025, recording a sixfold jump from 13.15 crore a decade earlier.

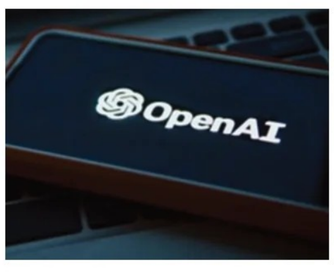
'ABOUT PRINCIPLE, NOT PEOPLE'

OpenAI robotics chief resigns over Pentagon AI deal

NEW DELHI

The head of OpenAI's robotics team, Caitlin Kalinowski, has announced resignation, citing the company's move to deploy its artificial intelligence (AI) models within the Pentagon's classified network.

AI has an important role in national security. But surveillance of Americans without judicial oversight and lethal autonomy without human authorisation are lines that deserved more deliberation than they got, Kalinowski said in a post on X, adding that the decision to resign was difficult.



OpenAI confirmed Kalinowski's exit in an emailed statement, saying it believes the Defense Department agreement creates a workable path for responsible national security uses of AI while making clear our red lines, no domestic surveillance and no autonomous weapons.

We recognise that people have strong views about these issues and we will continue to engage in discussion with employees, government, civil society and communities around the world, the company said.

Kalinowski joined OpenAI in November 2024 after leading augmented reality glasses' team at Meta.

OpenAI, in a late February deal with the Pentagon, struck an agreement to deploy advanced AI systems in classified environments, which the company requested the government to also make available to all AI companies, a release said.

We retain full discretion over our safety stack, we deploy via cloud, cleared OpenAI personnel are in the loop, and we have strong contractual protections. This is all in addition to the strong existing protections in US law, the company said.

The deal was reached after talks between the Trump administration and Anthropic broke down. Anthropic has said it will challenge a Pentagon designation that labelled the company a supply chain risk. OpenAI also publicly disagreed with the blacklisting of Anthropic. Anthropic also confirmed it has been formally designated a Supply Chain Risk (SCR) by the US government and the firm's CEO also apologised for criticising President Donald Trump.

INFRASTRUCTURE OF INDIA

India's infrastructure landscape is undergoing one of the most ambitious transformations in modern history. As the world's most populous nation and fifth-largest economy, India's ability to build, maintain, and modernize its infrastructure networks has become central to its development aspirations. From sprawling highways cutting through diverse terrain to digital networks connecting the remotest villages, infrastructure development in India represents both enormous challenges and unprecedented opportunities.

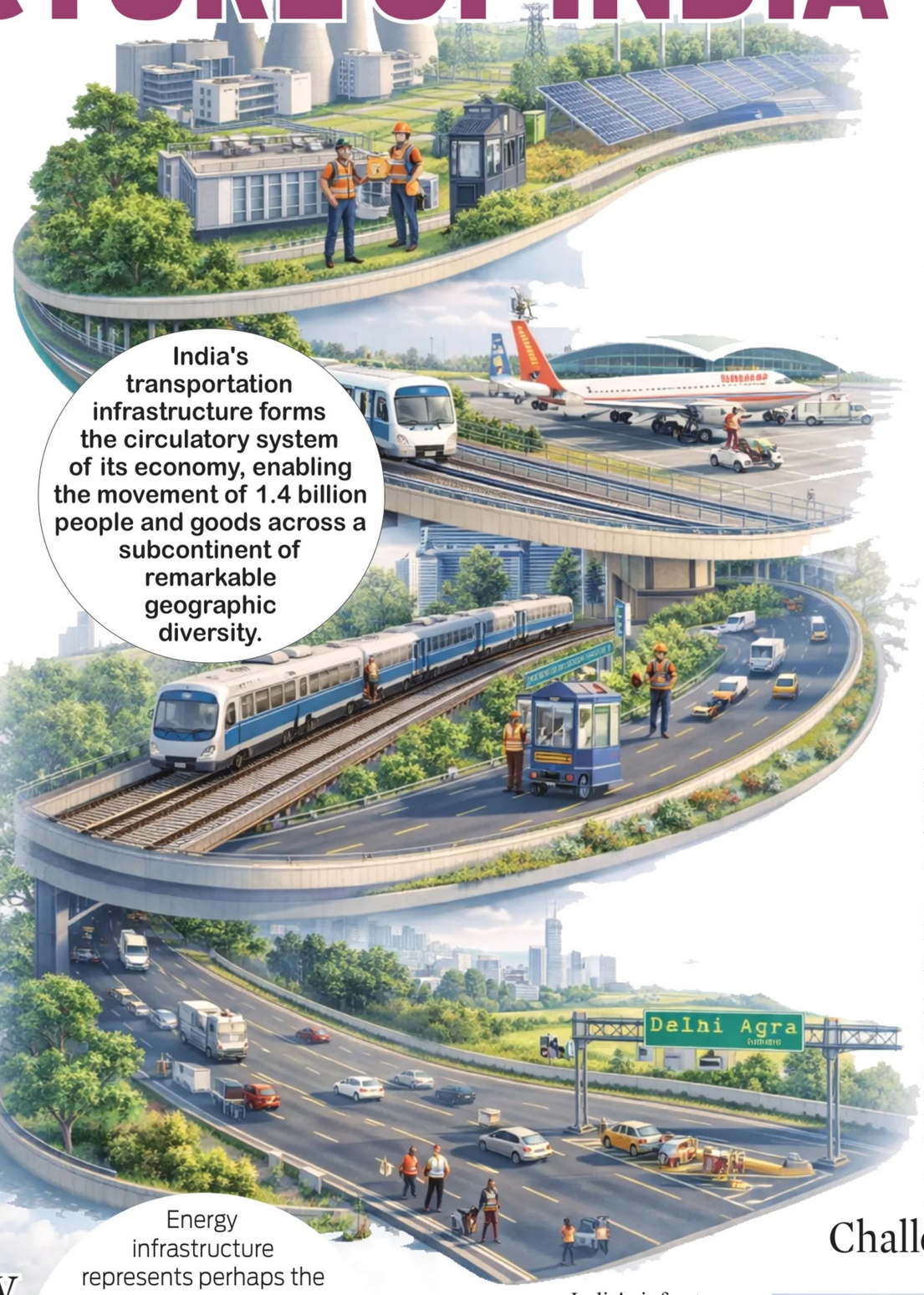
The Transportation Network: Roads, Railways, and Airways

Road Infrastructure

The road network in India is the second-largest in the world, spanning over 6.3 million kilometers. This vast network includes everything from six-lane expressways to narrow rural roads connecting remote villages. The National Highways, though comprising only about 2% of the total road network, carry approximately 40% of the total traffic, underscoring their critical importance to commerce and connectivity.

The government's Bharatmala Pariyojana, launched as a flagship highway development program, aims to optimize the efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country. This ambitious initiative focuses on developing economic corridors, coastal roads, and border connectivity, with particular emphasis on regions that have historically lacked adequate road infrastructure.

Despite significant progress, challenges persist. Road quality varies dramatically between urban and rural areas, with many rural roads becoming impassable during monsoon seasons. Traffic congestion in major cities costs the economy billions annually in lost productivity, while road safety remains a pressing concern with India accounting for a disproportionate share of global road fatalities.



India's transportation infrastructure forms the circulatory system of its economy, enabling the movement of 1.4 billion people and goods across a subcontinent of remarkable geographic diversity.

Railway Infrastructure

Indian Railways operates one of the world's largest railway networks, spanning over 68,000 kilometers of track and serving as the lifeline for millions of daily commuters. The railways represent a democratic mode of transport, connecting metropolitan cities to small towns and carrying everything from agricultural produce to industrial goods.

The introduction of semi-high-speed trains like the Vande Bharat Express marks India's entry into modern rail technology. Meanwhile, ambitious projects like the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor, being developed with Japanese collaboration, promise to bring bullet train technology to India. The dedicated freight corridors being constructed along the Eastern and Western routes aim to decouple freight and passenger traffic, dramatically improving efficiency for both.

Modernization efforts include station redevelopment, the introduction of modern coaches, and the electrification of routes to reduce dependence on diesel. However, the railways continue to grapple with aging infrastructure, safety concerns, and the need for substantial capital investment to meet growing demand.

Air Transportation

India's aviation sector has experienced explosive growth over the past two decades. The country now boasts over 150 operational airports, including state-of-the-art international hubs and regional airports connecting smaller cities under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, which aims to make air travel accessible to the masses.

Major airports like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore rank among the busiest in the world, handling millions of passengers annually. The government's privatization of airports has brought in significant investment and improved passenger experience, though questions about equitable regional development persist. The development of greenfield airports and the expansion of existing facilities continue at a rapid pace to accommodate India's growing middle class and their increasing propensity for air travel.

Energy Infrastructure: Powering a Growing Economy

Energy infrastructure represents perhaps the most critical component of India's development story. The nation's ability to provide reliable, affordable, and increasingly clean energy determines its economic competitiveness and quality of life for its citizens.

Electrical Grid and Generation

India has made remarkable strides in electricity generation and distribution. The country has achieved near-universal household electrification, a milestone that seemed distant just two decades ago. The installed power generation capacity has grown substantially, with a diverse mix including coal, renewable energy, nuclear, and hydroelectric sources.

The electrical grid has undergone significant modernization with the implementation of smart grid technologies in select areas. The One Nation, One Grid initiative has interconnected regional grids, enabling better load management and power sharing across states. However, distribution losses remain high in many states, and the financial health of distribution companies continues to be a concern that affects the sector's ability to invest in further improvements.

Renewable Energy Revolution

India's commitment to renewable energy represents one of the most aggressive transitions in the world. Solar and wind energy capacity has grown exponentially, making India one of the leaders in renewable energy deployment globally.
Massive solar parks, some spanning thousands of acres, dot the landscape from Rajasthan to Karnataka. The government's target of achieving substantial renewable energy capacity demonstrates India's commitment to combating climate change while meeting growing energy demands. Rooftop solar initiatives, solar pumps for farmers, and innovative financing mechanisms have democratized access to clean energy.

LOOKING FORWARD: Challenges and Opportunities

India's infrastructure journey is far from complete. Bridging the infrastructure gap requires sustained investment estimated in the trillions of dollars over the coming decades. Innovative financing mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, infrastructure investment trusts, and development finance institutions, are being deployed to mobilize this capital.

Climate resilience has emerged as a critical consideration. Infrastructure must withstand increasingly frequent extreme weather events while contributing to India's climate commitments. This requires integrating climate considerations into planning, design, and construction processes.

Regional disparities remain significant, with northeastern states and some central Indian regions lagging in infrastructure development. Ensuring equitable infrastructure development requires targeted policies and sustained political commitment.

The infrastructure sector also faces challenges around land acquisition, environmental clearances, and execution capacity. Reforms in these areas can accelerate project implementation and improve outcomes.

India's infrastructure story is one of remarkable progress amid persistent challenges. The combination of government initiative, private sector participation, and technological innovation has created momentum that, if sustained, promises to transform the nation's development trajectory. As India aspires to become a developed nation by 2047, its centenary of independence, infrastructure will undoubtedly remain central to realizing that vision.

Digital Infrastructure: Connecting a Digital India

THE UNIVERSE IS ABUNDANT STAYING POSITIVE IN CHALLENGING TIMES — AND WHY IT MATTERS

PRADIVYA NAMBIAR

In a world often filled with difficult headlines, global tensions, and constant comparison, it can be easy to believe that life is defined by struggle and scarcity. Yet history and human experience remind us that even in uncertain times, hope and possibility have always found a way to emerge. There is an old idea shared across many philosophies: the way we see the world often shapes the world we experience. At moments when the world seems filled with conflict and uncertainty, humanity often returns to a deeper question: how do people continue to move forward with strength and purpose? The answer may lie not only in external circumstances, but also in the resilience of the human mind.

The renowned psychiatrist Viktor Frankl explored this idea in his influential work Man's Search for Meaning. Reflecting on survival during extraordinarily difficult times, he observed that those who held onto meaning, hope, and a vision for the future often discovered the strength to endure even the darkest moments. His insight reminds us that while circumstances may be uncertain, the human ability to choose perspective remains powerful. That perspective becomes especially important in times like these, when the world appears filled with division and conflict. It is natural for people to feel overwhelmed by what they see and hear. Yet history repeatedly shows that humanity has always found ways to rebuild, renew, and move forward. And sometimes the reminder of this deeper truth appears in the simplest places.

Step outside and observe the natural world for a moment.

A single tree grows thousands of leaves each season. Rivers continue their journey year after year. The night sky stretches endlessly with stars beyond counting. Nature does not operate from a place of scarcity—it moves with extraordinary abundance. This raises a simple but powerful question: if the universe itself is abundant, why do so many people feel surrounded by limitation? Part of the answer lies in the environments we immerse ourselves in. The news, by its nature, often reports on challenges, conflicts, and crises because these are events that demand public awareness. While such reporting is essential, constant exposure to these stories can sometimes create the impression that negativity defines the world around us.

Social media adds another dimension. Carefully curated glimpses of success, luxury, and achievement can quietly create a sense of comparison. People begin to measure their lives against selected moments from others' journeys, often forgetting that every life unfolds with its own rhythm, challenges, and victories. Yet beyond these influences lies a deeper truth. Human history, like nature itself, is filled with creativity, resilience, innovation, and renewal.

Even during periods of hardship, ideas continue to emerge, communities rebuild, and individuals discover strength they did not know they possessed.

Thinkers such as Neville Goddard explored another dimension of this idea—the power of imagination and belief in shaping human experience. He suggested that the thoughts people consistently hold can influence how they move through life. When the mind focuses only on limitation, it often reinforces that outlook. But when individuals begin to imagine possibility and abundance, their actions, decisions, and outlook gradually begin to shift in that direction. This perspective does not ask us to ignore reality or deny that difficult moments exist. Rather, it invites us to remember that the human mind has an extraordinary ability to look beyond the present moment and envision a better future. In times of uncertainty, that ability becomes one of our greatest strengths. Throughout history, people have faced wars, crises, and upheavals. Yet even in those periods, humanity continued to create art, build communities, raise families, and dream of a better tomorrow. The search for survival, meaning, and hope has always been part of the human story.

The universe itself quietly reflects this principle every day. Life continues to expand. Forests grow, rivers flow, ideas emerge, and human potential evolves in ways that once seemed impossible.

Perhaps abundance is not something that needs to be created—it may simply be something we learn to recognize. And sometimes, the most powerful shift begins with a simple choice: to look beyond the noise of the moment and remember that even in challenging times, the universe still holds space for growth, hope, and possibility. For as long as humanity continues to imagine a better tomorrow, believe in possibility, and move forward with hope, the quiet truth remains: the universe has always been abundant—and the future has always belonged to those who dare to see it that way.

Man City Thrash Newcastle as Chelsea Edge Wrexham in FA Cup Drama

Manchester City cruise past Newcastle while Chelsea survive dramatic scare against Wrexham

LONDON

Manchester City delivered a commanding performance to defeat Newcastle United 3-1 and book their place in the quarter-finals of the FA Cup, while Chelsea FC survived a major scare to overcome Wrexham A.F.C. in a thrilling encounter.

Despite making 10 changes to his starting lineup, City manager Pep Guardiola watched his side dominate after initially falling behind at St James' Park.

Newcastle started brightly and took the lead when Harvey Barnes finished neatly following a clever pass from Sandro Tonali. However, the visitors quickly recovered and equalised just before halftime

through Savinho, whose unusual finish saw the ball bounce off his leg and into the net.

City seized control after the break when Omar Marmoush smashed home from close range to put the Premier League champions ahead. The Egyptian forward then sealed the result in the 65th minute with a powerful strike, completing his brace and ensuring City's comfortable progression to the last eight.

Guardiola praised his team's performance despite the heavy rotation ahead of their upcoming clash with Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League.

Elsewhere, Chelsea were pushed to the limit before securing a dramatic 4-2 extra-time victory over Wrexham at Racecourse Ground.

The Welsh side stunned the visitors when Sam Smith opened the scoring. Chelsea equalised through an own goal just before the interval, but Wrexham regained the lead late in the match when Callum Doyle found the net in the 78th minute.

Chelsea responded quickly as Josh Acheampong levelled the score four minutes later. The match turned decisively when Wrexham midfielder George Dobson was sent off in stoppage time, allowing Chelsea to dominate extra time. Alejandro Garnacho volleyed home before substitute João Pedro added a late goal to secure victory.

Chelsea manager Liam Rosenior admitted his team had been fortunate after making nine changes ahead of their upcoming match against Paris Saint-Germain.

Meanwhile, Arsenal FC kept their hopes of a historic quadruple alive with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Mansfield Town, with Eberechi Eze scoring the decisive goal.

Lamine Yamal's Stunner Lifts Barcelona Past Bilbao; Atletico Edge Sociedad

BARCELONA

Teen sensation Yamal scores decisive goal as Barcelona reclaim four-point La Liga lead

Teenager Lamine Yamal produced a moment of brilliance to hand FC Barcelona a narrow 1-0 victory over Athletic Bilbao in their La Liga clash, while Atlético Madrid secured a thrilling 3-2 win against Real Sociedad.

The 18-year-old winger scored the decisive goal in the 68th minute at San Mamés Stadium, curling a superb strike into the top corner to break the deadlock in a tightly contested encounter.

The victory allowed Barcelona to restore their four-point advantage at the top of the table over Real Madrid, who had earlier closed the gap temporarily after defeating Celta Vigo on Friday.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick opted to rotate his squad ahead of their upcoming UEFA Champions League last-16 match against Newcastle United. The changes resulted in a somewhat disjointed first-half display from the visitors, who struggled to create clear chances.

Athletic Bilbao looked the more threatening side early on. João Cancelo nearly put through his own net when his clearance struck the frame of the goal, while goalkeeper Joan García made crucial interventions to deny Selton Sanchez and Oihan Sancet.

The match remained evenly balanced until Yamal finally found space in the second half. After receiving a pass from Pedri, the youngster cut inside and unleashed a curling shot that struck the post before flying into the top corner, marking his 19th goal across all competitions this season.

"Even when he doesn't have his best game, he can decide matches," Flick said after the victory. "It's great to have a player who can make the difference in one moment."

In another key fixture, Atlético Madrid strengthened their grip on third place with an entertaining 3-2 win over Real Sociedad. Alexander Sørloth opened the scoring for Atlético before Carlos Soler equalised for the visitors.

Substitute Antoine Griezmann later set up Nicolás González with a clever backheel to restore Atlético's lead. Real Sociedad responded again through Mikel Oyarzabal, but González struck once more with a powerful header from Matteo Ruggeri's cross to seal the win.

The two sides will meet again in April in the Copa del Rey Final in Seville, setting up another exciting showdown.

Arsenal edge Mansfield 2-1 as Eze's second-half strike seals quarter-final berth

Eze Strike Sends Arsenal into FA Cup Quarter-Finals with Win Over Mansfield

LONDON

Arsenal FC advanced to the quarter-finals of the FA Cup after defeating Mansfield Town 2-1 in a hard-fought fifth-round clash, with Eberechi Eze scoring the decisive second-half goal.

Premier League leaders Arsenal fielded a heavily rotated lineup at Field Mill, as manager Mikel Arteta handed opportunities to several young players. Teenagers Max Dowman and Marli Salmon both started, making Arsenal the first Premier League club to begin a competitive match with two players aged 16 or younger.

Despite the inexperience in the lineup, Arsenal managed to hold their composure against a spirited Mansfield side backed by an energetic home crowd.

The hosts started brightly and created early chances that briefly unsettled the visitors. However, Arsenal took the lead when Noni Madueke produced a superb curling finish into the far corner, giving the London club the advantage.

Mansfield refused to back down and found their equaliser soon after the break. Substitute Will Evans capitalised on a defensive lapse by Arsenal to slot the ball home, reigniting hopes among the home supporters.

With the match finely balanced, Arsenal regained control midway through the second half. Eze stepped up with a moment of quality, unleashing a powerful strike from the edge of the penalty area that flew past the goalkeeper and into the net. The spectacular effort proved to be the winning goal, silencing the home crowd and ensuring Arsenal progressed to the last eight of the competition.

Arteta's side maintained discipline in the closing stages to protect their lead and continue their impressive season across multiple competitions.

The victory keeps Arsenal on course for silverware as they remain in contention in both domestic and European tournaments, raising hopes of a potential historic campaign for the North London club.

For Mansfield, despite the defeat, the performance against top-flight opposition highlighted their resilience and determination as they pushed one of England's strongest teams throughout the contest.

Brett Randell Makes History with Five Wickets in Five Balls in First-Class Cricket

WELLINGTON

Brett Randell etched his name into cricket history on Sunday by becoming the first player in 254 years of first-class cricket to take five wickets in five consecutive deliveries during a domestic match in New Zealand.

The remarkable feat came while Randell was representing Central Districts against Northern Districts in a Plunket Shield four-day match at McLean Park. According to records maintained by the Association of Cricket Statisticians and Historians, no bowler had previously achieved five wickets in five successive balls in first-class cricket since the earliest documented first-class match played in 1772.

The 30-year-old right-arm seamer produced a sensational spell that dismantled Northern Districts' top order. Randell began the extraordinary sequence by clean bowling Henry Cooper with the final delivery of his second over. He continued the momentum at the start of his next over by dismissing former New Zealand national cricket team Test opener Jeet Raval. Randell then struck three more times in succession, including the historic fifth wicket when he bowled international all-rounder Kristian Clarke.

The extraordinary burst left Northern Districts reeling and stunned the small crowd watching the match in Napier.

Randell did not stop there, claiming two additional wickets in the following over to finish with outstanding figures of 7 for 25. His devastating spell helped bowl Northern Districts out for just 82 in reply to Central Districts' first-innings total of 373.

The performance marked the best bowling figures in Randell's first-class career, which spans nine years and 38 matches.

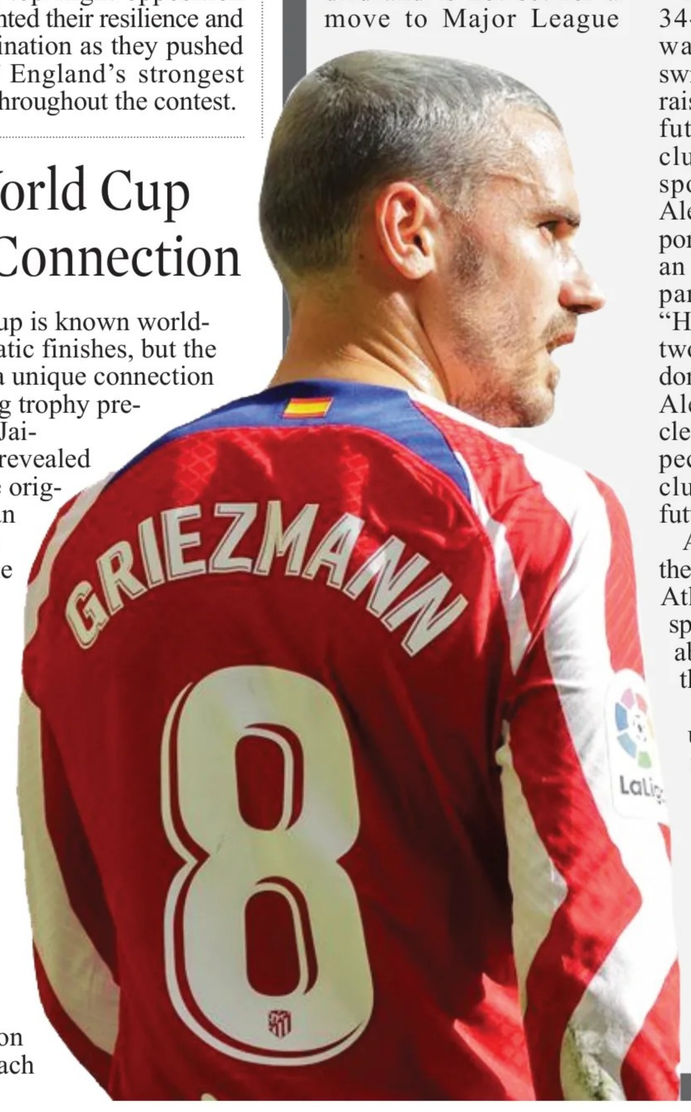
While five wickets in five balls has been achieved in shorter formats, it had never occurred in first-class cricket. Last year, Curtis Campher accomplished the rare feat in a domestic Twenty20 match, becoming the first cricketer to do so in a professional limited-overs game.

Randell's achievement now stands as a historic milestone in the longest format of the sport, adding a remarkable chapter to cricket's long statistical record and highlighting one of the most extraordinary bowling spells ever witnessed in first-class competition.

Griezmann Not Moving to MLS This Season, Atletico Director Confirms

MADRID

Antoine Griezmann will remain with Atlético Madrid and is not set for a move to Major League Soccer this season, the club's sporting director confirmed amid recent transfer speculation.



Rumours had linked the 34-year-old French forward with a potential switch to Orlando City SC, raising questions about his future with the Spanish club. However, Atlético sporting director Mateu Alemany dismissed the reports, stating that the veteran striker remains firmly part of the team's plans. "He has this season and two more years with us. I don't see any major news," Alemany said, making it clear that Griezmann is expected to continue at the club for the foreseeable future.

Alemany reiterated that the player's commitment to Atlético remains intact despite the ongoing rumours about a possible move to the United States.

"He is going to continue with us and nothing more," he added.

Griezmann further underlined his importance to the team by contributing an assist in Atlético's thrilling 3-2 victory over Real Sociedad in their La Liga clash on Saturday. The forward remains a key figure in the club's history, holding the record as Atlético Madrid's all-time leading scorer. During his illustrious career, Griezmann has played a crucial role in several of the club's successes and continues to contribute despite a slightly reduced role this season.

Under manager Diego Simeone, the French star has seen his playing time carefully managed, but he has still produced impressive numbers, scoring 12 goals across all competitions this campaign.

Griezmann also enjoyed a decorated international career with France national football team, helping the country win the 2018 FIFA World Cup before retiring from international football in 2024. Atlético Madrid are currently third in the La Liga standings and remain in contention on multiple fronts this season. The club is set to face Real Sociedad again in the Copa del Rey Final on April 18, while also preparing for a challenging UEFA Champions League round-of-16 clash against Tottenham Hotspur next week.

With crucial matches ahead, Atlético appear determined to retain one of their most experienced and influential players.

Iran Women's Football Team Exits Asian Cup, Faces Uncertain Return Home Amid Conflict

GOLD COAST

Iran's women's national football team exited the AFC Women's Asian Cup on Sunday after losing its final group match, leaving players facing the prospect of returning to a homeland now engulfed in war. Iran was defeated 2-0 by the Philippines at Gold Coast Stadium, ending its hopes of advancing to the quarterfinals. The loss followed earlier defeats to South Korea and tournament hosts Australia, ensuring the team's elimination in the group stage.

The squad had arrived in Australia last month to compete in the continental championship, before hostilities erupted on February 28 when the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran. Teams knocked out during the group stage typically depart the host country within days, but the escalating conflict has cast uncertainty over the players' return.

The Iranian team drew international attention during its opening match against South Korea when players remained silent during the national anthem. Some observers interpreted the gesture as a sign of mourning or protest, though the team has not publicly explained the decision. In subsequent matches against Australia and the Philippines, the players sang the anthem and saluted the flag.

Concerns about the players' safety have grown amid reports of criticism directed at the team in Iranian media. The Australian Iranian Council wrote to Australia's Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke urging authorities to ensure the safety of the squad while they remain in the country.

The organization also launched an online petition that had gathered more than 50,000 signatures by Sunday. The petition calls on the Australian government to guarantee that no player is forced to return to Iran while credible fears for their safety exist. It also urges authorities to provide independent legal advice, interpreters, and support for any player seeking protection.

Iranian players and team officials have largely declined to comment publicly about the situation in their country.

ICC Men's T20 World Cup Trophy Has Jaipur Connection

JAIPUR: The ICC Men's T20 World Cup is known worldwide for its fast-paced cricket and dramatic finishes, but the tournament's iconic trophy also carries a unique connection to the Indian city of Jaipur. The glittering trophy presented to the champions was crafted by Jaipur-based designer Amit Pabuwal, who revealed that he produced the final piece after the original concept was developed by Australian design firm Minale Bryce. According to Pabuwal, the initial design outline for the trophy was created in 2007, the same year the inaugural ICC Men's T20 World Cup was staged. Once the International Cricket Council approved the concept, Pabuwal was entrusted with transforming the design into the physical trophy. "Once the design outline was finalised, the ICC assigned me the work of making the trophy. That is how the ICC T20 World Cup trophy was produced in 2007," Pabuwal told.

The Jaipur craftsman said his earlier work had caught the attention of cricket authorities. He had previously designed the world's largest silver "Friendship Cup" trophy for cricket, a project that helped establish his reputation internationally and led the ICC to approach him for the prestigious assignment.

ICC Postpones Doha Meeting Amid Escalating West Asia Conflict

Global cricket body delays key governance meeting amid security concerns in region

NEW DELHI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has postponed its scheduled three-day board meeting in Doha, Qatar, citing the ongoing conflict in West Asia involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

The high-level meeting, originally planned from March 25 to 27, was expected to bring together ICC Board Directors, Chief Executives, committee members and senior officials to discuss key governance matters affecting the future of global cricket. However, the escalating regional tensions prompted the governing body to reconsider the schedule for safety and logistical reasons.

According to sources within the ICC, a formal communication informing members about the postponement was circulated. The message was sent just a day before the final of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup between India national cricket team and New Zealand national cricket team at Narendra Modi Stadium.

The ICC has now rescheduled the meeting for next month, although the exact dates are yet to be confirmed. Sources indicated that the gathering will still take place somewhere within the same continent once the situation stabilises.

The Doha meeting forms part of the ICC's regular governance calendar and typically provides an important platform for discussions on strategic planning, development programmes and policy decisions that influence international cricket.

Earlier, the ICC had selected Doha as the venue in recognition of the growing development of cricket in Qatar. The organisation has been working closely with the Qatar Cricket Association and the Qatar Olympic Committee to expand the sport's reach in the region.

In a statement released in February, the ICC highlighted the rapid progress cricket has made in Qatar in recent years, attributing it to increased grassroots initiatives and international collaboration.

Despite the postponement, ICC officials remain optimistic that the meeting will be held next month once regional conditions permit safe travel and smooth coordination among member representatives.

Australia Crush India by 10 Wickets in Women's Pink-Ball Test

Aus dominate match, sealing emphatic win and farewell for skipper Healy

PERTH

Australia women's national cricket team produced a commanding all-round performance to defeat India women's national cricket team by 10 wickets in the one-off day-night Test at Perth Stadium on Sunday.

The hosts completed a comprehensive victory after dismissing India for 149 in their second innings before comfortably chasing down the modest target of 25 runs in just 4.3 overs. Openers Georgia Voll and Phoebe Litchfield made light work of the chase, ensuring Australia wrapped up the match with ease.

The victory also served as a fitting farewell for Australian captain Alyssa Healy, who ended her illustrious Test career on a high with a dominant win against one of Australia's strongest rivals.

India had resumed the third day at 105 for six, hoping to stretch their lead and challenge the Australian bowlers. Overnight batters Pratika Rawal and Sneh Rana tried to steady the innings and briefly frustrated the hosts, taking the score to 132.

Rawal displayed admirable composure to score a fighting 63, anchoring the lower order with patience and determination. However, the task proved too steep for India once Rana was dismissed for 30 by Ashleigh Gardner, whose sharp delivery rattled the batter's off stump.

Following that breakthrough, India's resistance quickly faded. Gardner and all-rounder Annabel Sutherland combined effectively to wrap up the innings. Sutherland also produced a crucial moment in the field, taking a tumbling catch near the edge of the circle to dismiss Rawal, effectively ending India's hopes of extending the contest.

Sutherland's all-round performance earned her the Player of the Match award, highlighting Australia's dominance with both ball and in the field.

Reflecting on the defeat, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said the tour had been a learning experience despite the disappointing finish.

"We started well in the T20Is with a series win, but couldn't continue the good work in ODIs and Tests. Playing a full series in Australia was a good experience, and the pink-ball Test was a different challenge," she said. Healy, meanwhile, praised her team for bouncing back strongly after losing the T20 series earlier in the tour. "Bouncing back from the T20 series defeat was unbelievable and I'm proud of this group. I'll sing the team song one last time, but I'm happy to see this team moving forward and achieving more success," she said.

South African stars criticise ICC for favouring England's early departure from India

De Kock, Miller Slam ICC Over Travel Priority Dispute

NEW DELHI

Players from South Africa national cricket team and West Indies cricket team have criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC) over alleged unequal treatment in travel arrangements following their exit from the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup.

South African players Quinton de Kock and David Miller expressed frustration after learning that England cricket team had already departed India on a charter flight, while South Africa and West Indies remained stranded awaiting confirmation of their return travel.

England, who were defeated by India national cricket team in the second semifinal in Mumbai on Thursday, left for London on Saturday evening via a direct charter flight. Meanwhile, both South Africa and West Indies were still waiting for clarity regarding their departure plans.

The West Indies were eliminated from the tournament after losing to India by five wickets at Eden Gardens on Sunday. South Africa's campaign ended earlier in the first semifinal after a defeat to New Zealand national cricket team in Kolkata on Wednesday.

Taking to social media, De Kock voiced his disappointment at the lack of communication from the ICC.

"Funny ICC, we have heard nothing! Meanwhile England are leaving before us somehow? West Indies and Proteas are just in the dark. Strange how different teams have more pull than others," he wrote on Instagram.

Miller echoed the sentiment, pointing out that England had been eliminated later but still managed to secure immediate travel arrangements.

"Funny that England gets eliminated after WI and SA and gets on a charter back home tonight while WI and SA still wait for answers in Kolkata," Miller commented online.

West Indies head coach and former captain Darren Sammy backed Miller's criticism, urging the issue to be highlighted more strongly.

Bengaluru FC Beat Mohammedan Sporting 2-1 in ISL Clash

KOLKATA

Bengaluru FC secured a crucial 2-1 victory over Mohammedan Sporting Club in their Indian Super League encounter at Kishore Bharati Krirangan, thanks to first-half strikes from Ryan Williams and Ashique Kuruniyan.

The win lifted Bengaluru FC to fifth place in the league standings with seven points, while Mohammedan Sporting continued their disappointing campaign, still searching for their first points after suffering a fourth consecutive defeat.

Both teams entered the match following losses in their previous fixtures, prompting tactical changes by their respective coaches. Bengaluru head coach Renedy Singh made three changes to the starting lineup, bringing in experienced defender Rahul Bheke, handing a debut to Uzbek midfielder Siroj Kuziev, and pairing veteran striker Sunil Chhetri with Williams in attack.

Mohammedan Sporting coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo also reshuffled his side, introducing Lalmuanawma at right-back, Tangva Ragui in midfield and Israfil Dewan in the attacking lineup.

Bengaluru dominated from the opening whistle, launching several early attacks.

Russell Wins Australian Grand Prix as Mercedes Seal Dominant 1-2 Finish

MELBOURNE

George Russell delivered a composed and commanding performance to win the season-opening Australian Grand Prix on Sunday, leading a dominant one-two finish for Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team ahead of teammate Andrea Kimi Antonelli.

Starting from pole position, the British driver crossed the line 2.974 seconds ahead of Antonelli after a dramatic and action-packed race at Albert Park Circuit. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc completed the podium in third, while teammate Lewis Hamilton finished fourth.

The race marked Russell's sixth career Formula One victory and his first since the Singapore Grand Prix last year. Despite multiple interruptions caused by virtual safety car periods, Russell remained calm and controlled to guide Mercedes to an emphatic start to the 2026 season.

"Feeling incredible. It was a hell of a fight in the beginning," Russell said after the race. "I made a bad start and had some really tight battles with Charles early on, but I'm just glad to cross the finish line."

The race also tested Formula One's new power unit regulations, with half of the engine power now generated by battery energy. Drivers had to carefully manage energy by braking or lifting off the throttle to recharge their systems during the demanding 58-lap contest.

At the start, Leclerc made an excellent launch from medium tyres to briefly take the lead ahead of Russell. Hamilton also surged forward for Ferrari, while Antonelli dropped down the order before gradually recovering.

A thrilling wheel-to-wheel battle soon developed between Russell and Leclerc, with the lead changing hands several times in the opening laps. Russell eventually regained control and built a decisive advantage once the pit-stop strategies played out.

Alcaraz Cruises Into Indian Wells Third Round; Djokovic Battles Back to Win

INDIAN WELLS

World number one Carlos Alcaraz powered into the third round of the Indian Wells Masters with a convincing straight-sets victory, while Novak Djokovic had to fight hard for a comeback win.

The Spanish star defeated Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-3 in a dominant display that extended his unbeaten run in 2026 to 13 matches. Alcaraz controlled the match from the baseline, combining power and precision to wrap up the contest in just 66 minutes. Despite windy conditions on Stadium Court, the 22-year-old remained composed and barely faced resistance from the former world number three. He saved the only break point he faced in the second set and played with visible confidence throughout the match.

"I'm really happy with the things I've done today," said Alcaraz, who recently won the Australian Open to become the youngest player to complete a career Grand Slam. He also captured the Qatar Open title earlier this season and is now chasing a third crown at Indian Wells.

"I love being here so much. That's why I'm playing relaxed, calm and just enjoying the moment," the Spaniard added.

While Alcaraz progressed smoothly, five-time Indian Wells champion Djokovic faced a far tougher challenge. The Serbian legend needed two hours and 12 minutes to defeat Poland's Kamil Majchrzak 4-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Majchrzak started strongly, breaking Djokovic twice to claim the opening set. However, the 38-year-old Serbian gradually found his rhythm, raising his level in the following sets to regain control of the match.

Djokovic praised his opponent's performance, saying Majchrzak showed impressive variety and confidence early in the match.

"He played a tremendous first set," Djokovic said. "I reset mentally and started feeling the ball better as the match went on."

The encounter featured several long rallies, including a remarkable 40-shot exchange early in the deciding set. Djokovic eventually secured two crucial breaks to seal the victory and advance.

Defending champion Jack Draper also moved into the next round after rallying past Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

In another dramatic match, Brazil's João Fonseca saved two match points before defeating Russia's Karen Khachanov in three sets.

Later in the night session, American Taylor Fritz and Russia's Daniil Medvedev were scheduled to take the court as the tournament action continued in California.

Tajinderpal Singh Toor Wins Shot Put Gold at Indian Open Throws

PATIALA

Asian Games champion Tajinderpal Singh Toor made an impressive start to his season by winning the men's shot put gold at the Indian Open Throws Competition held at the National Institute of Sports Campus.

The national record holder comfortably crossed the 20-metre mark to register a winning throw of 20.51 metres, signalling strong form in an important year that features the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The 31-year-old shot putter delivered a consistent series of throws during the competition, surpassing the 20-metre mark three times. Besides his best effort of 20.51m, Toor also recorded throws of 20.02m and 20.07m, underlining his steady rhythm early in the season.

Toor, who has faced inconsistent form over the last couple of seasons, said he was pleased with his performance and credited improved training sessions for his strong start.

The Punjab athlete still holds the national record of 21.49 metres set in 2023, and he is aiming to peak later in the year with the goal of defending his Asian Games title.

In the men's shot put event, Karanveer Singh of Punjab secured the silver medal with a throw of 19.36m, while Haryana's Sanyam finished third with 18.28m.

The spotlight was also on hammer thrower Damneet Singh, who claimed gold in his event with an impressive best throw of 70.64m. Representing Reliance, Damneet came agonisingly close to the national record of 70.73m but narrowly missed surpassing it.

His series included throws of 69.29m, 70.21m and 70.04m, demonstrating consistent high-level performance throughout the competition. Ashish Jakhar of the Army finished second with 68.09m, while Devang from Railway Sports took third place with a throw of 63.27m. In the women's events, Seema emerged victorious in the discus throw, producing a winning effort of 57.58m to secure the gold medal. The competition also featured several junior and youth events across shot put, hammer throw and discus throw categories, though participation was limited in a few age groups.

The Indian Open Throws meet served as an important early-season platform for athletes preparing for major international competitions later this year.

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